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THE GOVERNMENT OF AMERICAN  
TRADE UNIONS

BY

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## PREFACE

This study was undertaken while the author was a graduate student at the Johns Hopkins University. It was submitted as a dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from that institution in June, 1907. Some portions of it have been amplified and other parts rewritten since that time.

The large and valuable collection of trade-union publications at the Johns Hopkins University has been used, and other documents at the headquarters of the national unions have been consulted. Use has been made of the scattered pamphlet literature published particularly during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Information gleaned from records has been supplemented by personal interviews with officials of most of the national unions and with officers of local unions in Baltimore, Boston, New York, Chicago, and St. Louis.

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance received at every stage of the work from Professor Jacob H. Hollander and Professor George E. Barnett, of the Johns Hopkins University.

T. W. G.



# THE GOVERNMENT OF AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS

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## PART I

### THE UNIT OF GOVERNMENT

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#### CHAPTER I

##### THE SHOP MEETING

The original unit of government in American labor organization is the mass-meeting of members either in shop meeting or in local union. Shop meetings are assemblies of those working in the same industrial establishment, and are ordinarily held in the shop or factory. Meetings of workmen are nearly always convoked, however, outside the establishment, and are usually attended by journeymen not merely from one shop but from a number of shops in the locality. Popular assemblies uniting the members of a craft throughout an entire community are commonly known as "locals" or local unions. All other units of government—the district, state, national, and international associations—are combinations of shop meetings or of local unions.

The formation of permanently organized unions is usually preceded by a period of unorganized resistance during which the journeymen of a craft, when aroused to action by a reduction of wages or some other specific grievance, decide without forethought or preparation to strike. For example, the anthracite miners, prior to the formation of unions in their trade, which occurred about 1868, did not passively

endure their low wages and dilapidated houses and the mulcting of their earnings by the high-priced company stores. Isolated strikes, incited by the bolder and more turbulent spirits, broke out now at one mine and now at another; but as these movements were disunited and without preparation, the employers succeeded in quickly crushing them.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes such unorganized movements involve all the journeymen of a trade in a locality, but as a rule they are limited to the members of a single shop or factory. Shop strikes occur frequently at the present day in unorganized trades, and this fact is often used by labor leaders to substantiate their statements that the strike preceded and was not invented by the trade union.

The form of organization known as the shop meeting has had a long history. The "shop call" existing among the hatters of Danbury, Connecticut, as late as 1885 was an ancient institution which antedated the formation of permanent unions among the craft, and it is said to have had its origin far back in colonial times. For many years, whenever any man, woman, or child working in a hat factory had a grievance, he or she cried, "Shop called." Immediately a meeting of all the employees in the shop was held, and the complaint was laid before them. If the grievance was considered just, a committee was appointed to wait upon the employer; and if this committee reported a rejection of its demands, the members of the shop assembled in meeting decided whether or not to strike.<sup>2</sup>

In the trade-union organization of today the shop is a comparatively unimportant unit of government, used ordinarily only for limited administrative purposes. Shop meetings are, indeed, so inconvenient that they can be convoked only at long intervals, otherwise difficulty arises with employers; and they are being discontinued by the Hatters and by other unions among which they once prevailed.

Important exceptions are found in certain trades in which

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<sup>1</sup> First Annual Report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Agriculture of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, p 328.

<sup>2</sup> New Haven Register, December, 1893.

the somewhat elaborate machinery of an organized local union is not justified because the number of workmen in each community is very small. The members are united through informal shop meetings, convoked within the walls of the factory. Such is the policy of the Print Cutters, who make the wooden rollers used in printing wall-paper. Whether the rollers are prepared by the manufacturer of wall-paper or by small jobbers who make a specialty of this kind of work, the demand for rollers is so limited that only a mere handful of print cutters are found in each factory. As a consequence, even in places where several shops are located the total number of print cutters is so small that the formation of a local union is often not deemed advisable. In fact, only four local unions have been chartered by the National Print Cutters' Association, namely, one in each of the cities of New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and New Brunswick, New Jersey. In other cities the men employed in each shop hold meetings and elect a clerk, who collects dues and enforces the observance of union rules. A committee is also created to have charge of the label and to lay the grievances of the men before the employer. The members of a shop are not permitted to strike or to take any decisive step without consulting the nearest local union, because, it is said, if power is vested in such a small body, the leaders among them can be too readily discovered and punished for their aggressiveness by employers.

The Machine Textile Printers, who print cotton and woolen goods, are similarly organized because of similar conditions. Whether textiles are printed by the cotton or woolen manufacturer or by the small jobber who specializes in this part of the work, the number of machine printers in each mill is small. The Machine Textile Printers have no local unions, but maintain in each establishment an informal shop organization. The shops are federated into four district unions, known respectively as the Eastern, the Western, the Northern, and the Southern District. A "delegate" to the national board of directors serves as the head of each

district, and conventions of representatives from each shop within the district are held at intervals.<sup>8</sup>

The employees in each industrial establishment might have formed themselves into a constitutionally organized body with meeting places outside of the shop or factory, and in this way the members of a trade in each locality would have been divided into as many unions as there were shops. Certain conditions made necessary, however, the early rise of the so-called local union with jurisdiction over all members of a craft in the same town or city. In the first place, close cooperation was needed between the journeymen of the same trade in the various shops of a community in order to maintain uniform conditions of employment, for if the men in one shop succeeded in raising wages above the general level, their fellow-craftsmen in neighboring establishments were likely to compete for such choice employment and, by underbidding, force wages down again. Moreover, the employer who was compelled to pay higher wages than the average was greatly handicapped in his struggle against competitors, and was likely to be driven out of business. In the second place, journeymen in each shop usually—certainly during the infancy of American trade unionism—constituted too small a group to enable them without considerable financial strain to rent a hall, pay officers' salaries, and meet all expenses incident to the maintenance of a well-organized society. In other words, the government of one large mass-meeting is more economical than the government of many small ones. Finally, the beneficiary aims of early trade societies also rendered advantageous, from a financial standpoint, as large a membership as possible. In nearly all trades, therefore, the first governmental trade body possessing a constitution, meeting at regular intervals, and bargaining with employers according to certain definite policies was the local union.

In certain trades where the industrial establishments are

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<sup>8</sup> Rules, Regulations and By-Laws of the Machine Printers' Beneficial Association of the United States, 1886. The constitution of 1886 is still in force.

exceptionally large and widely scattered the journeymen working for each employer constitute a single local union. The miners at each colliery, who are a numerous and more or less isolated body, usually compose the primary unit of government. At first, informal meetings were held whenever an emergency required, either in the pit, or on the open common near the shaft of the mine;<sup>4</sup> but after some difficulty the miners were slowly persuaded to hire a hall, meet at regular intervals, and adopt a constitution. Great mass-meetings of the miners at all pits in the vicinity of a certain town have indeed been convoked, but only very occasionally, and for a specific purpose. In the bituminous coal fields of western Pennsylvania, for example, when the miners at one colliery "blacklegged," in other words, when they filled the contracts of a neighboring pit where the men were on strike, the workers at the other collieries in the vicinity would occasionally hold a mass-meeting, pass resolutions of remonstrance, and sometimes march in a procession to the blacklegging pit, there to camp until the men laid down their picks.<sup>5</sup>

Since in the window glass industry the factories are all large and since there is usually only one plant in each town, the several national unions<sup>6</sup> of window glass workers organize the men in each establishment into a governmental body, known as the "preceptory." In a few of the places where two or more window glass factories exist the workers meet together in joint session. There has been considerable opposition to these joint mass-meetings, and the recently formed 'Amalgamated Window Glass Workers of America' at the first annual convention forbade its members to hold them.<sup>7</sup>

Among the shirt, waist, and laundry workers of Troy the employees in each factory at first constituted a separate union. The United Laundry Workers, chartered by the

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<sup>4</sup> National Labor Tribune, July 23, 1883, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., July 28, 1880.

<sup>6</sup> The terms 'national union' and 'international union' are used synonymously throughout this essay. See below, p. 75.

<sup>7</sup> Proceedings, 1905, p. 116.

American Federation of Labor in 1899, permitted the members of one "shop union" to enroll laundry workers employed in another factory, provided they were given neither voice nor vote in the meetings. When ten laundry workers from another factory had been admitted, they were to be organized into a separate union. In the case of custom or small laundries a union of members working in several shops could be formed.<sup>8</sup> When in 1900 the Laundry Workers were merged into the Shirt, Waist, and Laundry Workers' International Union, no such rules were adopted; and apparently the general policy of the present association is to organize in each city either a single local union or several local unions, one for each branch of the trade.

In the railway unions the members are organized, whenever practicable, according to the railroad upon which they are employed. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers permits five or more engineers working on the same railway system to organize a lodge or local subdivision. In some instances the brotherhood has had to organize subdivisions comprising engineers who run engines on different roads.<sup>9</sup> The Locomotive Firemen, the Conductors, and the Trainmen also organize their members, whenever practicable, into local lodges according to the system upon which they are employed, though none of them have, like the Engineers, adopted a fixed rule to this effect. Even the yardmen, whose work is localized in character, whose wages vary at different points on the same railroad, and whose methods of bargaining are perhaps somewhat less uniform than those of the other railroad employees, have found advantageous in many cases the plan of organizing the members according to the railway system on which they work. Thus the local union of switchmen in Buffalo at first included switchmen employed in the yards of the New York Central, Michigan Central, Lake Shore, Nickel Plate, and other lines running into that city. The inconvenience of this policy

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<sup>8</sup> Constitution and By-Laws, 1899, art. iii.

<sup>9</sup> Constitution and Statutes, 1904: Constitution, sec. 50, Standing Rules, secs. 1, 2.



was soon manifest. At meetings of the union complaint was made that the men employed by the New York Central, who formed a majority, would cause all questions relating to their own system—questions upon which in all probability only they themselves could vote—to be considered early in the evening. Matters of interest to switchmen on other roads were delayed until midnight, and sometimes not considered at all. Much ill-feeling was engendered; and today there are six switchmen's lodges in Buffalo, one for each line having terminal facilities in that city. In many places, however, the yardmen on all railroads are organized into one local union. Save in the above exceptional instances and in those places where there happens to be only one shop or factory devoted to a particular industry, the employees in each commercial or manufacturing establishment are not organized into separate unions.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COMPOSITION OF THE LOCAL UNION

The territorial jurisdiction of a local union is usually bounded by corporate limits of the town or city in which it is located. In some instances, however, its territorial jurisdiction is extended so as to include small outlying towns, since the journeymen in such places, organized or unorganized, may seriously undermine the scale of wages enforced by the strong union in a large city. The New York local union of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union, for example, has jurisdiction over members of the trade within a radius of fifty miles from the city, and includes pressmen in such towns as Hoboken, Jersey City, and Newark, as well as the several boroughs of Greater New York.

In a few instances certain peculiar conditions of the trade have rendered necessary the formation of local unions of even wider territorial jurisdiction than the Pressmen's Union of New York City. Thus the structural iron workers who are sent out in gangs from large cities to build bridges, frequently form colonies in isolated communities, and the territorial jurisdiction of the local union in each large city is made broad enough to include these colonies. The Cleveland local union, for example, embraces within its membership all structural iron workers in forty-three counties. Similar conditions exist among the compressed air workers, who work in the caissons and diving-bells used in driving piles and building piers for bridges. The important companies employing compressed air workers have their offices in New York City, whence gangs of men are sent to all parts of the country; and the union of the craft, though bearing the title of a national organization, is really a local

union of about four hundred members, with headquarters in New York City. The men in each colony maintain an informal organization during the weeks or months in which they are absent from New York, but their wages are fixed by the local union before they leave the city, and all power is practically vested in the mass-meeting of members who remain in New York.

During the early days of American trade unionism the journeymen of each craft constituted a fairly homogeneous body, and each of the early local societies admitted any worker at the trade living in the territory over which it claimed jurisdiction. The division of labor, the influx of foreigners, and the appearance of women and negroes in industry have created distinct groups within the craft, however, and have made necessary in many trades the organization of these groups into separate local unions.

Before the rise of American trade unions the work in certain industries had already been subdivided. In the early part of the nineteenth century there were employed, for example, upon the building of a ship a number of different craftsmen, such as the sail-maker, the rigger, the ship-carpenter, the ship-joiner, and the caulker.<sup>1</sup> With the development of industry in the United States many other crafts have been divided into numerous subcrafts or branches. In place of the shoemaker, who received the leather from the middleman and made the whole shoe in his own little shop, there have appeared the cutter, the fitter, the treer, the stitcher, the laster, the heeler, the sole tacker, the edge maker, and the shoe fastener, all working together in large establishments to produce the finished article. The tailor who cut the garment and sewed it with his needle has been replaced in the ready-made clothing industry and, to a certain extent, even in the custom trade by the measurer, the cutter, the trimmer, the stitcher, the baster, the examiner, the sponger, the

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<sup>1</sup> Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser, June 30, 1809.

presser on coats, the presser on pants, the roller, and the folder. At first, the divisions of a trade were by no means rigidly fixed. Thus even today, although the work of manufacturing a cigar is often divided between a leaf selector, a stripper, a filler, a breaker, and a roller, yet in many shops the same journeyman performs all of these separate processes, and the union insists that whenever it is possible the apprentice be trained to be an "all-round workman," capable of making the whole cigar. Gradually, however, the several branches assume all the characteristics of distinct trades. In the clothing trade, for example, the baster comes to know only his special part and cannot perform the work of the cutter; he is paid a different wage, and is absorbed completely in his peculiar class interests.

There is now a strong tendency to unite all of the trades or divisions of a trade in any one industry into a single national federation of local societies. Thus the present national union of wooden ship-builders includes shipwrights, joiners, caulkers, boat builders, and ship cabinet-makers. For many years the International Typographical Union embraced bookbinders, compositors, pressmen, stereotypers and electrotypers, and photo-engravers, and today it has jurisdiction over compositors, proof-readers, machine tenders, mailers, and type foundrymen.

The organization of the members of several trades or branches of a trade in the same local union has, however, been found undesirable. In the first place, each group of workmen in an industry resents the right of the other groups to vote upon the numerous matters which it considers its particular concern. If in addition one group of workers is in the majority and is able to dominate the general meeting, friction is almost inevitable. At the same time, the very close cooperation required to maintain a uniform scale of wages for journeymen performing the same work is unnecessary between groups of employees doing different kinds of work and hence receiving different wages.

As lines of cleavage have appeared within the craft, local

societies have split asunder into several independent unions, one for each branch of the trade. The Iron Molders' Union of North America,<sup>2</sup> the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers,<sup>3</sup> and other national unions from the beginning of their history have permitted the constituent trades or divisions of a trade to form separate local societies. On the other hand, the International Typographical Union has as far as possible required all members of the craft to be united in a single local union, and has departed from this policy only in exceptional cases and then with great reluctance.<sup>4</sup> The national unions of window glass workers do not subdivide their members according to the four branches of the craft, but unite all the employees in the same plant into one local union. Unions of unskilled laborers need not subdivide their members according to the character of their work. For example, the Laborers' Protective Society of New York City is a local union composed of hod-carriers, mortar-mixers, and other helpers of the bricklayers and the masons. The National Association of Blast Furnace Workers and Smelters of America, a union of comparatively unskilled workers, does not attempt to organize those doing different kinds of work into separate local unions.

As the division of labor is made more minute and as machinery is introduced, work becomes more unskilled, the employees pass more readily from one kind of work to another, differences between trades begin to be obliterated, and organization into separate local unions according to branch of employment is unnecessary. In the large packing houses of Chicago the work is minutely divided. Thus, in the department of cattle butchering alone there are over thirty specialists from the unskilled foot skinner and paunch trimmer to the skilled splitter and floorman. Apprenticeship is unknown, and the unskilled workman passes by promotion from the lowest to the highest grade of work. Between

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<sup>2</sup> Constitution, 1859, art. iii, sec. 2, in Proceedings, 1859.

<sup>3</sup> National Labor Tribune, August 5, 1876, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> G. E. Barnett, "The Government of the Typographical Union," in Studies in American Trade Unionism, ed by Hollander and Barnett, pp. 24-25.

employees in different departments there is some distinction, and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen gather those in each department into a separate union. In the city of Chicago, for example, there are local unions of cattle butchers, hog butchers, hide cellar men, oleomargarine workers, sausage makers, lard refinery employees, and so on, but the continual shifting from one kind of work to another makes the subdivision of those in each department undesirable.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, among the mine workers, whose national union gathers together into the same body all classes of employees about a colliery, there is a constant movement upward from the least skilled to the most skilled work. The breaker boy, the door boy, or the fan boy may later become a driver or a runner, or may by successive steps be promoted from mine laborer to miner and, if he show ability, from miner to fire boss and foreman. By a reverse process the skilled miner, incapacitated by accident or old age, returns to slate picking, and so becomes a breaker boy again.

In some national unions there has been urged the adoption of a rule requiring that the members doing a certain kind of work be always organized into separate local unions, and that in places where they are not sufficiently numerous to form a union they join the nearest local union of this branch of the trade. Such a rule was advocated but not passed by the Cigar Makers' International Union after the admission of the cigar packers about 1885.<sup>6</sup> Most national unions charter a separate local union for each of the most important branches of the trade in the large cities, and in the small places unite all members in one union. In small communities there are too few of each division of the craft to warrant separation, and the boundaries between trades are not always so clearly defined as in the large cities. Thus

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<sup>5</sup> For an account of the method of organization and history of the growth of locals among the workers in the different departments of the Chicago packing houses, see *Official Journal* [Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America], March, 1903, pp. 1-12. See also J. R. Commons, "Labor Conditions in Slaughtering and Meat Packing," in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. xix, pp. 1-32.

<sup>6</sup> Proceedings, 1887.

the bricklayers who in the large cities only lay bricks, in rural sections often do the work of stone masons and plasterers.

The policy of the national unions varies greatly. Some of them, such as the associations of brick, tile, and terra cotta workers and of the ship-wrights, joiners, and caulkers, grant charters to separate divisions of the craft only in the largest centers of the industry. In the important shoe centers separate charters are granted to a number of the various branches of boot- and shoemakers. In other places, while the lasters and cutters who form the most skilled portion of the craft are organized into separate local unions, all other branches of the trade are gathered together into one union. In some of the smaller centers all boot and shoe workers are organized into a single local union.

The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union divides its members into local unions primarily according to the particular garment upon which they are employed, and subordinate unions of ladies' waistmakers, shirt makers, and cloak operators have been formed in New York City. The cutters, who compose probably one of the most skilled groups among the garment workers, desire whenever it is possible to be organized separately from the other divisions of the trade, and cutters on all kinds of ladies' garments are usually gathered together into one local union. In New York, however, some attempt has been made to subdivide them again according to the garment upon which they are employed. The Gotham Association, for example, is composed of all cutters upon washable goods. The United Cloak and Suit Cutters' Association claims jurisdiction over cutters in all shops devoted exclusively to the manufacture of ladies' outer garments. In some places the cloak pressers are formed into separate unions.<sup>7</sup> The United Garment Workers, composed of those manufacturing men's ready-made clothing, carry out much more completely this twofold division into local unions according to the kind of garment and the par-

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<sup>7</sup> Quarterly Report of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, December 1, 1902, to March 1, 1903, p. 4.

ticular part of the work done. The line of demarcation is, however, difficult to maintain. Ladies' cloak and suit factories, for example, make washable garments, either regularly, or at times when the demand for their special line of goods falls off; and this has caused some friction between the association of ladies' cloak and suit cutters and the association of cutters on ladies' washable goods in New York City. To conclude, rigid rules are impracticable. The organization of local societies must be determined by the peculiar way in which the trade is subdivided and by the conditions in each city.

Many national associations which grant separate charters to each branch of the trade have refused further to subdivide the local union so as to create more than one local union for each branch. The objections are that the existence of two or more unions in the same branch of the trade in any locality may mean two or more conflicting wage scales and sets of apprentice rules; that several small unions are more expensive than one large one; and that if suspended members or a dissatisfied minority can secede and obtain a separate charter or join another existing society, the authority of the local union will be undermined. The unions of a trade in each locality can, however, maintain uniform conditions of employment by cooperating together in district councils. The local union may be prevented from becoming too small by fixing a minimum number of applicants to whom a charter may be granted. In order to keep suspended members of a local union from getting a charter, many national unions require that the consent of the unions already existing in the community must first be obtained. Since, however, this rule prevents the formation of local unions even when it is desirable, the Cigar Makers' International Union and a few other organizations vest all power to grant charters in the national executive board; but before a new charter is granted, the application must be brought to the attention of the other unions in the community, and



all objections are carefully considered.<sup>8</sup> So, while the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union,<sup>9</sup> the United Brewery Workmen,<sup>10</sup> and a few other national associations recognize in the composition of their local units of government only differences in the kind of work, many others subdivide the members into subordinate unions according to differences of sex, color, nationality, and sometimes merely for governmental convenience.

Experience has shown that whenever it is possible women should be organized separately. In the first place, women hesitate to join a union composed largely of men. Moreover, the claim is made that in mixed local unions the men do not accord the women full opportunity to discuss their particular class concerns, and show prejudice when allowed to vote on questions of interest to their female members. Certainly, womens' unions enroll a much larger proportion of the female section of the trade and arouse greater and more sustained enthusiasm than do mixed unions.

Local unions composed wholly of women undoubtedly existed at an early date. About 1833 the United Beneficial Society of Journeymen Cordwainers of New York City organized a women's branch which was not strong, and came together only as occasion demanded.<sup>11</sup> The cordwainers of Philadelphia also formed a women's branch about this time.<sup>12</sup> In 1846 the female shoe stitchers of Lynn formed a Stitchers' League, which was wrecked by a few malcontents after a short existence. In 1855 the stitchers of Lynn secretly re-organized and maintained an existence for a few years, and these same stitchers of Lynn were the first of the boot and

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<sup>8</sup> Constitution of the Cigar Makers, adopted 1896, fourteenth edition, sec. 170.

<sup>9</sup> Constitution, revised 1906, sec. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Constitution, 1904, art. ix, sec. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Rise and Progress of the General Trades' Union of the City of New York, and its Vicinity, with an Address to the Mechanics in the City of New York and through the United States. New York, 1833. P. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Address issued to the Citizens and Government of Philadelphia. Philadelphia, 1835.

shoe workers to apply for a charter from the Knights of Labor in 1883. They were organized as Daughters of Labor Assembly No. 3016 and, in accordance with the policy of the Knights of Labor, admitted not only stitchers, but also women working at other trades.<sup>13</sup> Local unions of female laundry workers, cap makers, printers, parasol and umbrella makers, tailors, and workers in other trades were organized in various places after the close of the Civil War. In 1870 the National Lodge of the Daughters of St. Crispin was formed, with subordinate lodges of stitchers in various places. A convention of the women's unions in New York State was held in the same year, and an attempt was made to form a State Workingwomen's Association, but the organization died with the adjournment of the convention.<sup>14</sup> The depression which began in 1873 wrought the destruction of women's societies in common with the general destruction of most trade unions throughout the country. Of late years the movement to organize women as compared with the growth of trade unions among men has proceeded but slowly, though with more success in the West than in the East. In Chicago the movement has, indeed, attained considerable proportions. An overwhelming majority of the women workers in twenty-six different trades, with a total membership of about thirty-five thousand, were organized in 1904. The list includes unions of women cracker packers, waitresses, laundresses, paper-box makers, and scrub-women, and embraces, with two important exceptions—namely, the servant girls and the stenographers—almost every trade in which women are extensively employed in Chicago.

When, as in the case of the boot and shoe stitchers, the overall workers, and the hat trimmers, all those in one branch of a trade are women, the problem of separating the two sexes resolves itself simply into a division according

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<sup>13</sup> The Laster, February 15, 1889, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Annual Address of the President, in Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Session of the New York State Workingmen's Assembly, 1871.

to the nature of their work. The female branch of the trade is, as a rule, organized in large cities into a separate local union; in small places a mixed union of both sexes is formed. Sometimes, however, when the interests of the male and female branches are very closely interwoven, they are organized together even in large cities. Thus, while the bookbinders have formed a women's union of stitchers in New York City, yet the female stampers of New York are combined with the male gold layers.

When women compete with men for the same work, a mixed local is usually formed in order better to enforce the payment to them of the same wages as men. Thus, in the shirt, waist, and collar factories of Troy the ironers, some of whom are men and some women, are combined into one union. In 1869 the International Typographical Union granted a charter to the female compositors of New York City. After several years' experience, the women were found to be working for a lower wage scale than the male printers; the charter was therefore revoked, and the Typographical Union has never attempted since then to form independent unions of women.<sup>15</sup> One important exception in this connection is the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen. Within the last few years women have partly replaced men at some branches of work in the large meat packing houses. The butchers have made no attempt to force the women to join the unions composed of men in each department. On the contrary, the female employees scattered throughout all departments are at Chicago, South Omaha, and other meat packing centers gathered into one large local union known as the "Woman's Union."<sup>16</sup>

The appearance of the negro as an industrial competitor caused another division of the local union in a number of trades. After the close of the Civil War the competition of

<sup>15</sup> Barnett, *The Government of the Typographical Union*, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> T. W. Glocker, "The Unit of Government in the Meat Cutters' and Butchers' Union," in the *Johns Hopkins University Circular*, new ser., 1905, no. 6.

the newly emancipated negro was greatly feared by many American workmen. "The negro," declared the president of the Workingmen's Assembly of the State of New York in 1870, "will no longer submit to occupy positions of a degrading nature, but will seek an equality with the whites in the various trades and professions. For a time, we may not have to contend against their labor; and all may be well. Yet I feel impressed with the necessity of preparing for the future by organizing such colored workmen as may now or hereafter exist *into unions by themselves*, and recognizing their organizations. If we discard this element of labor and refuse to recognize it, capital will recognize it and use it to our great disadvantage."<sup>17</sup> Already, indeed, in 1867 the importation of colored ship caulkers from Portsmouth, Virginia, to Boston during the struggle in that city for an eight-hour day had been a practical illustration of the way in which the negro might be used as a strike breaker.<sup>18</sup>

At this time the white mechanics refused consistently to admit colored men into their own local unions; and in very few localities were there enough negroes employed at the same trade to make possible the formation of separate colored unions. Partly through the efforts of the Workingmen's Assembly of the State of New York, three organizations of colored men were formed in New York City in 1870, namely, the Saloon Men's Protective and Benevolent Union, the Colored Waiters' Association, and the First Combined Labor Institute. A Colored National Labor Union was also formed in 1869, and held several annual sessions. This organization aimed to secure higher wages for colored men and to increase the number of occupations in which they could find employment; it gave attention also to the problem of obtaining better school facilities for colored children, and was interested in certain cooperative land and home-building

<sup>17</sup> Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Session of the Workingmen's Assembly of the State of New York, 1870, p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> Address of the National Labor Congress to the Workingmen of the United States. Chicago, 1867.

schemes.<sup>19</sup> But the desire for political rights and for recognition by the political parties at this time completely filled the minds of the negroes to the exclusion of industrial matters. Their trade associations seem to have degenerated largely into political clubs, and the trade-union movement inaugurated among them during this period met apparently with little success.

At first the international unions of cigar makers, bricklayers, and members of certain other trades absolutely excluded negroes from membership, and a few of them did not remove the ban for many years. Many other international unions, particularly those which have felt the competition of the negroes most keenly, have admitted them freely from the first. The American Federation of Labor refuses to enroll national unions which draw distinctions as to color. In 1891 it forced the International Association of Machinists to admit negroes by countenancing a rival international organization which did not draw the color line. In 1894 the barrier against the admission of colored men was removed by the International Association of Machinists, and in the following year the two rival organizations united.<sup>20</sup>

When the national associations have removed the ban of prohibition, subordinate local unions have frequently refused to admit negroes, and have demanded that they be organized under separate charters. As a rule, distinctions as to color are less frequently made in the North. Shortly after the women in the Chicago meat packing houses were unionized, a colored girl asked admittance to the meeting room. "Admit her," said the president after a moment's silence, "and let every one give her a hearty welcome." Since that time colored women have been freely admitted to membership.<sup>21</sup> In the South, however, where negroes are more numerous

<sup>19</sup> Circular Issued by the Colored National Labor Union to the Colored Workmen of the United States, Organized in Trades, Labor, and Industrial Unions, Calling for Selection of Delegates, and Outlining Proposed Work of the Second Annual Meeting, Held in Washington, Jan. 9, 1871.

<sup>20</sup> Report of the Industrial Commission, vol. xvii, p. 217.

<sup>21</sup> Official Journal [Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America], October, 1902, p. 28.

and race feeling is stronger, they are usually formed into separate local unions. In one instance the white carpenters of New Orleans, about 1884, refused to join a local union of the trade affiliated with the National Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners because the charter for New Orleans was already held by a few blacks, and at that time the brotherhood refused to grant more than one charter in the same city.<sup>22</sup> Later, the national union of carpenters was forced to amend its laws so as to permit the formation of more than one union in each place; and today over sixteen local unions composed wholly of negro carpenters are to be found in the Southern States.

Friction between nationalities has led to further subdivision of the local union in a good many American trades. The Anthracite Coal Strike Commission found some nineteen nationalities at work in the mines. The employees of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company include representatives, it is said, of thirty-two nationalities speaking twenty-seven different languages. In the meat packing houses of Chicago, Germans, Bohemians, Lithuanians, Poles, Slovaks, Italians, and Greeks have succeeded one another in bewildering succession. Obviously, to organize each of these many races into separate local unions is frequently impossible, and national trade unions whose members speak many tongues often refuse to attempt it. Resort is had to various expedients in order that business may be transacted. Constitutions, circulars, and other documents are printed in several languages. Interpreters are used at the meetings of the local unions; a recording secretary is sometimes created for each language spoken by the members, and the officers are usually divided among the several nationalities. In a few instances the various races meet in adjoining rooms, and propositions are brought successively before each body. Such makeshifts are inconvenient; and, when race antagonism arises, the only solution is the subdivision of the local.

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<sup>22</sup> Report of the General Secretary, in Proceedings, 1884.

Besides general race antipathy, ill-feeling between nationalities arises in various ways. In the late seventies a union of foreign cigar makers, composed of Cubans, Spaniards, Mexicans, and Italians, with a preponderance of the Spanish element, was formed in New York City. Shortly afterwards, during the public agitation in favor of Cuban liberty, the members began to discuss current political questions, with the result that the local union went to pieces.<sup>23</sup>

From one cause or another, therefore, each of the several nationalities working at a trade demands a separate local union. When, as in the case of the Carpenters or Bricklayers, the trade is only slightly subdivided, separate local unions of foreigners can be readily formed; but in the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen and the United Garment Workers, where there are many subdivisions, the problem becomes more difficult. The Butcher Workmen recognize no distinctions as to race or nationality. The United Garment Workers have organized in Chicago a local union of Italians who are employed as pressmen, pants finishers, and coat makers; and when the number of workers in one branch of the trade is great enough to justify further subdivision, differences of nationality are sometimes recognized. Obviously, this process of division is possible only in the large cities.

A local union, though its members compose a comparatively homogenous group, may be divided because it has become too large for good government. If the number of members is too great, the meetings degenerate into mob assemblages, and intelligent discussion of any important question is difficult. Men who advocate a sane and conservative policy are often hissed down. Factions are inevitably created, and threaten by their acrimonious bickerings to disrupt the organization.

Unscrupulous leaders also take advantage of such conditions to establish themselves in power. In the days of Sam

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<sup>23</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, May, 1878, p. 3.

Parks, the walking delegate of the Structural Iron Workers who was sent to Sing Sing Prison for blackmailing employers, there was only one local union of structural iron workers in New York City. The membership was nearly four thousand, and meetings were held in a small hall which seated only a few hundred. Sam Parks built up a small army of followers by using the power which his position gave over employers to secure the jobs as foremen and other choice positions for his favorites. When he desired reelection or needed a vote of confidence, he would order his adherents to come early. The room would be packed with men who voted as he desired, and the other members would fail to find admittance. A somewhat similar condition of things has at times existed in the New York and Chicago unions of bricklayers and in other large local unions in other trades. For example, Local Union of Bricklayers No. 7 of New York City had in 1870 a membership of two thousand, and met in a hall with a seating capacity of three hundred and fifty. There were several factions within the organization, and, in order to secure the adoption of a particular measure, one clique would sometimes pack the hall. In this way a minority in the local union brought about, for a time, the withdrawal of the New York local union from the international union.

The size of the local union is greatly diminished in many organizations by division according to branch of the trade, sex, color, or nationality. For example, in New York City the local union of structural iron workers of Sam Parks's day has been replaced by three unions, one of housesmiths and bridge men, another of inside architectural bridge and structural iron workers, and a third of finishers. But in unions such as the Bricklayers and the Carpenters, where subdivisions according to trade, sex, color, or nationality are unimportant, the local unions are very frequently too large. The international secretary of the Bricklayers has several times proposed to prevent the growth of such large unions by limiting the membership of each local union to five hun-



dred.<sup>24</sup> A rule limiting the membership of each subordinate association to four hundred was adopted by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters in 1886.<sup>25</sup> The provision proved unsatisfactory, however, and it was repealed a few years later. As far, then, as present indications show, the general tendency seems to be not to adopt rigid rules as to size, but to create additional local unions in any community as occasion appears to demand.

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<sup>24</sup> Annual Report of the President and Secretary, for term ending December 1, 1890, p. 47. For a description of conditions in the Chicago local union of bricklayers, see Reports of the President and Secretary, 1886.

<sup>25</sup> Constitution and Rules for Local Unions, 1886.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FEDERATION OF LOCAL UNIONS

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the local societies of organized trades have as a rule been federated into district, state, national, and international unions. The most common form of federal association is the international union with jurisdiction over subordinate societies in Canada and sometimes even in Mexico as well as in the United States. There have been three important causes of the federation of local trade unions: first, the movement of workmen from one city to another; second, the competition between manufacturers in different places; and third, the need of a joint fund for the support of certain trade-union activities.

Probably the chief cause of the federation of local trade organizations has been the constant movement of journeymen from one part of the country to another. This form of labor competition existed, of course, from the birth of American trade unionism, and in 1815 was already a very serious problem to the local societies of printers which had been formed by that date in all the large cities of the Atlantic seaboard. One writer, discussing the movements of the working population in 1847, just a few years before the era of federal unionism, says of the artisan class that they too, like their richer neighbors, "must sometimes change their place. When work is dull in one town, they go to another, and there are thus two streams of workmen perpetually setting between our two great cities, while in a smaller degree a similar circulation is kept up through the whole country. There is also a current of emigrants to the west; and, in this, there is always a considerable infusion of mechanical labor."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. W. Alexander, *The American Mechanic and Workingman*, p. 108.

With increased rapidity and decreased cost of railway transportation, labor has become continually more mobile. In nearly all trades there is a class of travelling craftsmen or "tramp" journeymen, mostly young men, who, imbued with the modern spirit of restlessness, travel from place to place, and work for a few weeks or months, now here, now there, as fancy or the hope of larger wages may direct. The amount of this shifting labor is especially large in the building trades, probably because of the intermittent character of the work, and regularly organized gangs move constantly to those localities where building operations are especially active. A few years ago a part of this shifting body of laborers may have been at work on the buildings of the World's Fair in St. Louis. Later, they were employed perhaps on the New York subway. Then, possibly, the building operations in Baltimore's burnt district attracted them; and still later they may have been engaged on the buildings of the Jamestown exposition or upon the reconstruction of San Francisco.

Besides the labor current between the cities, there are smaller eddies from the country and the small towns into the large cities, and vice versa. The union carpenters in large cities for years have complained bitterly of periodic invasions by the "hatchet and saw" carpenters from the surrounding country and the small outlying towns. On the other hand, the photo-engravers in the small towns of New England and of New York State fear the competition of the photo-engravers coming from New York City, who are in great demand on account of their superior skill, and replace, even at considerably higher wages, the poorer resident workmen.

An industrial depression, the introduction of machinery, or any other condition which increases unemployment or decreases the skill required serves to intensify in any trade this interurban competition. About the year 1880 wood-working machinery was introduced in planing mills; and as a consequence the doors, sash, moldings, window-frames,

and other fittings which the carpenter had formerly made by hand in his workshop were now made by machinery in the factory. Consequently, in every large city there was created a small army of idle members of the trade, ready to "scab" in their own or other towns.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the work of the carpenter on a building had been minutely subdivided. For this reason the annual influx of relatively unskilled country carpenters assumed large proportions.

This movement of workmen from one place to another handicaps the local union greatly in its efforts to improve the conditions of employment. Frequently when a local union has succeeded in raising wages above the general level, union and non-union members of the trade in other cities who hear of it rush to the place, and by their underbidding force down wages possibly below their original level.<sup>3</sup> "Take the case of the journeymen tailors," says a writer in 1847. "Suppose this class of operators in Newark to strike for higher wages, and to succeed. Journeymen tailors will be at once tempted to flow from New York, and this influx will be in proportion to the general distress; and secondly, to the amount of increasing remuneration. Of course it will be less than it would be in the case of unskilled labor, such as that of the piecers and pickers in cotton factories, where the vacuum would be filled up almost immediately. The consequence of this transfer of labor is that wages rise elsewhere, and by degrees fall here. After a short time, the proportion is much what it had been; and the general rise of level is scarcely appreciable."<sup>4</sup>

Sometimes local unions engaged in industrial war have discovered unexpectedly that their strike is lost because the employers have been able by advertisements to secure from other cities journeymen who were willing to act as strike breakers. The master printers of New York pursued this policy as early as 1809, advertising in Boston, Philadelphia,

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<sup>2</sup> *The Carpenter*, October, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> Historical Sketch, in Constitution of the New York Typographical Association of June, 1831, as amended in 1833.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander, p. 127.

and other cities for journeymen to fill the places of the striking members of the New York Typographical Society.<sup>5</sup> Sooner or later in all trades, therefore, the federation of the local societies has been urged as a means of preventing competition for employment between unionists in different cities. In the spring of 1881 the loss of a strike because of the influx of out-of-town workers led the three local unions of carpenters and joiners in St. Louis to agitate for the creation of a national union of the trade. A provisional committee elected by the three local unions began the publication of a journal which was sent broadcast throughout the country as a means of spreading the arguments in favor of a national union. As a result of this campaign, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America was formed shortly afterwards.<sup>6</sup>

The movement of journeymen from place to place neutralizes the efforts of the independent local societies to control the supply of workers by limiting the number of those learning the craft. For example, a union in Baltimore may enforce the most rigid rules for defining the period of apprenticeship and the number of apprentices to each shop; but if the unions of the craft in Philadelphia and Washington have a lax apprentice system, probably the only result will be that Baltimore will serve as a convenient outlet for the constantly accumulating body of unemployed in both cities. The need of some national regulation of apprenticeship, therefore, has been another cause for the federation of local unions. The adoption of a series of uniform apprentice rules for local societies was an important work of the national conventions of printers which in 1836 and 1837 made an unsuccessful attempt to establish a national union.<sup>7</sup> In the address to journeymen printers, issued in 1851, one argument urged in favor of establishing a national organization was the need of limiting apprentices, "by which meas-

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<sup>5</sup> Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor, no. 61, November, 1905, p. 873.

<sup>6</sup> The Carpenter, May, 1881.

<sup>7</sup> Address to Local Societies by the Convention of the National Typographical Society in 1836. Washington, 1836.

ure, a too rapid increase in the number of workmen, too little care in the selection of boys for the business, and the employment of herds of half men at half wages to the detriment of good workmen would be effectively prevented."<sup>8</sup> The national regulation of apprenticeship was from the beginning an important purpose of the federal unions of iron molders<sup>9</sup> and cigar makers,<sup>10</sup> and a rule limiting the number of apprentices was adopted by the International Union of Bricklayers as early as 1867.<sup>11</sup>

As long as the local societies of a trade are not united, the member suspended for non-payment of dues or for some other violation of the union rules is able to escape his penalty by travelling to another city. There, upon payment of an initiation fee, he will probably be admitted to the union of the locality, and so will be able to find employment. Under such circumstances the threat of suspension loses some of its terror for the delinquent, and much of the coercive power of the union over its members is destroyed. The effective punishment of outlawed members has been an incidental purpose in the organization of federal trade unions. Some years before the rise of a national union the scattered societies of printers exchanged lists of "rats," as offenders against the union were called, and by general agreement all local unions refused to admit such individuals to membership.<sup>12</sup> The address of 1850 to the printers of the United States advanced, as another argument in favor of the establishment of a national union, the possibility of adopting "measures to prevent disgraced members of the profession enjoying anywhere in the United States those privileges which belong exclusively to honor-

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<sup>8</sup> Address Issued by the Convention of 1850 to the Journeymen Printers of the United States.

<sup>9</sup> Constitution, 1864, art. viii, in Proceedings, 1864. See also Proceedings, 1867.

<sup>10</sup> Constitution for the Government of Local Unions, art. ii, sec. 1, in MS. Proceedings of the Second Session of the Cigar Makers' International Union, 1865.

<sup>11</sup> Constitution and Rules of Order, 1867.

<sup>12</sup> See page 104.

able printers."<sup>13</sup> At an early date the federal organizations of iron molders,\* bricklayers, locomotive firemen, and many other crafts published in their trade journals, or exchanged by correspondence between the local unions, lists of expelled members whom all subordinate branches were forbidden to admit.

On the other hand, from the point of view of the travelling journeyman some agreement between the scattered local unions of a trade is desirable, in order that he may be admitted more readily to the union of the place in which he hopes to find work. The ardent unionist is often unable to pay the high initiation fee required for membership in the association of the place to which he has journeyed in search of work. Consequently, he turns "scab," and accepts a much lower wage than he had previously earned, or, if the local union is strong, does not find employment. The address to journeymen printers issued in 1850 declared that "the formation of a national union of printers will relieve the distress of brother craftsmen, incurred in journeying from one place to another in search of work." "One reason," says a writer in the *Iron Molders' International Journal*, "for the formation of a national union was that the right hand of fellowship might be extended to a molder everywhere in his wanderings."<sup>14</sup> The same idea was also expressed by the delegates who met in 1864 to form the *Cigar Makers' International Union*.<sup>15</sup> The invariable policy of national associations of admitting members of one subordinate union to all other subordinate unions without an initiation fee has greatly benefitted the "tramp" journeyman, and so also has the system of loans to those travelling in search of work, which some seventeen of the one hundred and thirty or more federal trade organizations in the United States are maintaining.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Address Issued by the Convention of 1850 to the Journeymen Printers of the United States.

<sup>14</sup> *International Journal* [Iron Molders], May, 1871.

<sup>15</sup> MS. Proceedings of Convention of the Cigar Makers' Union, 1864.

<sup>16</sup> J. B. Kennedy, "Beneficiary Features of American Trade Unions," in *Johns Hopkins University Studies*, ser. xxvi, nos 11-12, p. 96.

A second important cause of the federation of local societies has been the need of keeping wages and other conditions of employment affecting cost of production uniform in competing establishments. A typical illustration is afforded by the boot and shoe industry. Except for certain popular high-grade shoes, competition between manufacturers of footwear in various parts of the country has reduced profits to a very small amount. At the same time, one trust, by means of its ownership of patents, has been able to control the price of shoe machinery, and another trust, aided until recently by a prohibitive tariff on hides, has been able to fix the price of leather. Moreover, methods of production are very much the same in all parts of the country. The most important variable element in the cost of production is, therefore, wages; and a difference of a few cents per piece in several departments of a factory, or possibly even in a single department, may make the difference between ruin and a prosperous business.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the boot and shoe manufacturer resists desperately any attempt of a local union to raise wages. If the union is strong and he is forced to yield, he may be compelled through the falling off of sales to shut down his plant or reduce his working force.

The independent local unions have great difficulty not only in raising wages, but also in preventing them from falling in sympathy with reductions in other places. An employer calls together his employees, and informs them that his rivals in other cities are driving him out of business. If he continues to pay the same wages as before, he will be compelled, he tells them, to shut down his plant, certainly during the dull season. If, however, they will submit to a ten per cent reduction, he will be able to sell his shoes, coal, iron, or whatever the commodity may be some cents cheaper, and will secure certain large contracts for goods. The men, he declares, will lose nothing by the reduction. The factory will continue to run at full time, and some may

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<sup>17</sup> The Union Boot and Shoe Worker, April, 1900, p. 10.



even recover the lost wages by working overtime. His employees in all probability yield, and then his competitors, who find themselves losing trade, propose in turn a reduction to their men, and so the movement spreads.<sup>18</sup> "The indiscriminate cutting of miners' wages in one place is often followed by sympathetic reductions in distant regions," said the secretary of the Miners of Western Pennsylvania when proposing an interstate federation of miners in 1883.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, even in recent years the reductions in the rate of wages paid in the bituminous district of West Virginia, a region which the United Mine Workers of America have never been able to organize thoroughly, have repeatedly tended to lower the scale maintained in the other bituminous coal fields, particularly in Ohio and western Pennsylvania.<sup>20</sup>

In some industries, however, competition does not exist between employers in different localities, and hence it has not been a cause of the creation of national trade unions. There is no such interurban competition, for example, in industries where workers such as barbers, retail clerks, hotel and restaurant employees, theatrical stage employees, and street railway employees perform a personal service, nor where workers such as bakers and confectioners produce an article for local consumption. In the latter class may also be included members of the building trades, though in recent years large construction companies have come into existence which bid for contracts in many places and send a part of their permanent body of employees to do the work.<sup>21</sup> The competition between contractors in different cities is, however, still very limited in amount. Moreover, at the time when the international unions of bricklayers, carpenters, painters, plumbers, and other of the building trades were organized such competition did not exist, and hence it

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<sup>18</sup> For example, see description of conditions in the iron and steel industry, in *National Labor Tribune*, May 7, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *National Labor Tribune*, January 13, 1883, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> *United Mine Workers' Journal*, June 9, 1892; April 13, 1893.

<sup>21</sup> When a company obtains a contract in a place where the wage scale is lower than that paid to their own employees, it sometimes hires local journeymen to do the work in such places, but this practice is vigorously opposed by the union.

exercised no influence upon the formation of such associations.

Not only wages, but the length of the working day, methods of wage payment, and many other items in the contract for employment affect the cost of production. Such abuses as the truck system and the screen system, for example, have been retained even by scrupulous coal operators in order to meet the competition of less conscientious employers who insist upon continuing such practices; and they can be abolished only by the combined efforts of all miners' local unions in the country. Thus, about 1883, one of the districts of Ohio went on strike against the screen system, whereupon the president of the state organization of miners issued a circular ordering the strikers to return to work, since the screen system could be abolished only by the cooperative action of the various state unions.<sup>22</sup>

The desire to secure uniformity in wages, hours, and other conditions of employment which directly or indirectly affect cost of production has been a primary cause for the creation of many national and international unions. In the address to journeymen printers of the United States, issued by the preliminary national convention of Printers held in 1850, "an understanding in the regulation of scales of prices in different localities so that those in one place may not be permitted to become so comparatively high as to induce work to be sent elsewhere" is suggested as one aim of the proposed national union. The Window Glass Workers, when issuing a call for their first national convention in 1874, urged the need of a uniform sliding scale for all window glass factories as the chief reason for creating a national union.<sup>23</sup> The establishment of a uniform rate of wages was a primary aim of the men who formed the New England Boot and Shoe Cutters' Union,<sup>24</sup> the New England Lasters' Protective Association,<sup>25</sup> and the International Boot

<sup>22</sup> National Labor Tribune, December 1, 1883, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., May 23, 1874, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> The Laster, October 15, 1890, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., August 15, 1888, p. 1.

and Shoe Workers' Union, though such uniformity has not been attained even at the present day.

Uniform regulation of the terms of the labor contract was the chief reason for the formation of district federations by the anthracite coal miners of Pennsylvania<sup>26</sup> and by the bituminous miners of western Pennsylvania. The latter district included all collieries situated upon railroads or rivers by which coal was brought to the Pittsburgh market. The Miners' National Association, formed in 1873, made no attempt to maintain uniform conditions of employment, since at that time each coal district had its own exclusive market, and mines in one district did not compete with those in another. The market for coal soon became national, however, and the abolition of the screen system of wage payment and the establishment of an eight-hour day and other rules of employment were stated as leading purposes in calling the national convention of the trade in 1880<sup>27</sup> and 1883.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the creation of a permanent, stable national organization among the miners really dates from the first joint conference of miners and operators which in 1886 drew up the first joint wage scale for the bituminous coal fields of Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and a small section of Iowa.<sup>29</sup>

The miners have sometimes attempted to limit the output of coal in the hope that by raising its price they would secure higher wages from employers. To be effective, the output of all competing collieries must be limited, and for this purpose the several county associations of the anthracite coal miners of Pennsylvania federated together about 1869. A National Nut Coal Restriction Convention was called in 1880, but it failed in its aim because certain state associations in the Middle West refused to cooperate.

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<sup>26</sup> The county associations among the anthracite coal miners grew out of an attempt to establish an eight-hour day at all competing collieries (First Annual Report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Agriculture for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1872-3).

<sup>27</sup> National Labor Tribune, March 27, 1880, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., May 26, 1883, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> See page 101.

Similarly, the regulation of the pro rata production of glass throughout the United States was enumerated as one of the purposes for calling the first national convention of window glass workers in 1874.<sup>30</sup>

A third important reason for the federation of local societies has been the need of a joint fund from which to pay strike, sick, death, disability, and out-of-work benefits. Such a joint fund has been greatly needed to support the members of a local union involved in a strike. If a strike has behind it the financial resources of all the local unions of a trade, amounting perhaps to a hundred thousand dollars, it has obviously much more chance of success than when supported by only one local union with perhaps fifteen hundred dollars in its treasury. With a hundred thousand dollars instead of fifteen hundred dollars to draw upon, the members involved in a difficulty with employers can be supported for a much longer time. "Scabs" can also be bought off and kept from taking the places of the strikers.

The need of a central strike fund was urged as a reason for calling the first national convention of window glass workers in 1874.<sup>31</sup> The same argument was advanced by the committee of the St. Louis local union of carpenters which brought about the formation of a national union of the trade in 1881.<sup>32</sup> Both the National Typographical Society of 1836 and the national convention of journeymen printers held in 1850 urged that the several societies of the trade cooperate to aid local unions involved in strikes. Indeed, the payment of strike benefits has been recognized very generally as an important function of national trade unions, but the system has been very slowly established by the workers in those industries where the size of the es-

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<sup>30</sup> National Labor Tribune, May 23, 1874, p. 1. The national associations of both window glass workers and flint glass workers have pursued the policy of suspending work in all factories during a portion of the summer months, partly in order that necessary repairs may be made during the hot season, but largely in the hope of securing steadier employment at higher wages during the winter months.

<sup>31</sup> National Labor Tribune, May, 1874.

<sup>32</sup> The Carpenter, May, 1881.

tablishment is small and hence where a strike involves only a small part of the membership of a local union. For this reason a joint strike fund was not created by the Printers until 1885, notwithstanding that a resolution favoring the maintenance of such a fund was adopted at the first national convention. The small local unions demanded repeatedly during this interval that they be aided by the international union in their struggles with employers, but the large local unions, who were better able to finance their own strikes, always opposed the plan. For the same reason the amounts contributed to local unions from the treasuries of the national unions of the building trades have been inadequate, and strikes have been largely supported from local funds. With the rise of employers' associations in the building trades and in the printing industry, however, strikes not infrequently involve nearly all the members of a local union, and to maintain them the local union must receive financial help from the international union.

The payment of sick, death, or out-of-work benefits from the federal rather than the local treasury is urged for two reasons. In the first place, when each subordinate union maintains its own system of benefits, a member forfeits the right to enjoy them whenever he travels to another city in search of work, for even if the union in the city to which he journeys does pay benefits of identical amounts and character, a new member must usually be a member for six months or a year before he becomes entitled to receive them. In the second place, only the large local unions are able to maintain systems of benevolent relief. A single death during the first year would probably bankrupt the small union of ten or twenty members.

Insurance against death and accident has always been an important feature of all railway unions because of the high premiums charged railway employees by the insurance companies, and undoubtedly the desire for a national system of insurance exerted some influence upon the formation of national organizations in certain branches of the service.

The Grand Division of the Order of Railway Conductors, for example, formed a mutual insurance association at its first convention in 1868. The Order of Railroad Telegraphers was organized in 1886 as a purely benevolent national association, and continued as such until 1891, when its laws were so amended as to make it also an industrially protective union.<sup>33</sup> The present international organization of railway firemen was preceded by the International Firemen's Union, whose sole function was to promote collective bargaining. Many lodges desired the adoption of a system of national insurance; and as the leaders of the old association refused to accede to their demands, some of them seceded in 1874 to form the present Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, which has benevolent as well as industrial aims.<sup>34</sup>

The desire to pay sick, death, and out-of-work benefits has, however, exerted relatively little influence upon the creation of district, state, or national unions. In fact, with the exception of certain railway brotherhoods, none of the early federal associations adopted systems of benevolent relief until some years after their formation. Although the Iron Molders' International Union was organized in 1859, its first beneficiary feature—the payment of a certain sum upon the death of a member—was not adopted until about 1878.<sup>35</sup> The Cigar Makers' International Union was organized in 1864. In 1873 the so-called endowment plan for the relief of widows and orphans was inaugurated, but proved a failure and was abandoned a year later. Not, indeed, until 1880 were the sick and death benefits which are today such important features of the organization permanently established.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, sixty-two out of one hundred and thirty-four national and international unions are

<sup>33</sup> American Federationist, September, 1902, p. 621.

<sup>34</sup> The history of the struggle between the two international associations of locomotive firemen can be traced in the contemporary numbers of the Locomotive Firemen's Magazine, vols. i and ii, December, 1876–November, 1878.

<sup>35</sup> Constitution and Rules of Order, 1878.

<sup>36</sup> Journal and Program of the Twentieth Convention, 1893, p. 53.

not maintaining any form of benevolent relief at the present time.

Before local societies began to federate into national and international trade unions there was a long period of groping and experiment during which the scattered societies endeavored to cooperate by correspondence. Many years prior to the formation of a national association of the trade the union hatter who left Danbury, Connecticut, in search of work at some nearby town bore with him a travelling card, which by agreement entitled him to membership in unions of hatters in other places without the payment of an initiation fee. So also today, though the local unions of female hat trimmers have not yet federated, one local union of hat trimmers recognizes the card presented by the member of a sister society.

The early associations of printers were very successful in their efforts to cooperate with one another. In the first place, by means of an active correspondence, union printers were prevented from flocking to cities where members of a sister society were engaged in a strike. When in 1809, for example, the master printers of New York advertised in other cities for journeymen, offering good wages and permanent positions, the New York Typographical Society wrote to the other organizations in the trade that its members were on strike for higher wages, and that the purpose of such advertisements was "to fill the city with hands, and thereby reduce the prices of work in this city to their former standard." In 1810 the Philadelphia society notified the New York organization in its turn that its members were about to strike in order to enforce a new wage scale. In response, the New York union called a special meeting, and all present agreed by resolution not to take "any situation vacated by any of our brethren in Philadelphia under the present circumstances." Again, on the eve of a strike in 1816 the Boston Typographical Society sent a letter to all printers' unions in the country requesting that members of

the trade in other cities should not come to Boston in answer to advertisements for journeymen, and so endanger the success of the strike. The blacklist of suspended or expelled members kept at the present day by most national and international unions had its prototype in the list of "rats" or outlawed members exchanged by these early associations of printers.

The independent printers' societies attempted also to bring into uniformity the scales of wages paid in different cities.<sup>37</sup> In 1815 the master printers of New York opposed the demand of their journeymen for higher wages on the ground that the resulting increase in the cost of printing would lead the New York booksellers to have their work done in places where wages were lower. Thereupon the New York society appointed a committee to induce the journeymen of other cities, and of Philadelphia and Albany in particular, to raise their wages to the level of the New York scale. Probably in part through the efforts of this committee a higher scale of wages was adopted within a short time by the Albany union. The wages of printers employed on government work in Washington were higher than those paid in other cities, and in consequence, during the sessions of Congress, Washington became the Mecca of "tramp" printers from all sections of the United States. The Columbia Typographical Society of Washington desired, therefore, that wages be uniform in all parts of the country. In 1815 the society adopted a "list of prices similar to that in Baltimore in order that wage conditions might be brought into uniformity with those existing in the nearest important city."<sup>38</sup>

The establishment of a central organization to carry out more effectively the activities which the local unions had

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<sup>37</sup> In 1806 the scale of wages for union boot- and shoemakers was the same in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, but apparently no definite agreement to maintain such uniformity existed between the associations of the trade in the three cities (Trial of the Boot and Shoemakers of Philadelphia on an Indictment for a Combination and Conspiracy to Raise their Wages. Philadelphia, 1806. P. 51).

<sup>38</sup> Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor, no. 61, November, 1905, pp. 836-1033.



maintained with partial success by correspondence was an easy step, and the printers' societies which had corresponded so vigorously were naturally the first to take the step. Indeed, the New York Typographical Society is said to have proposed a confederation of local printers' organizations as early as 1816; but concerning the truth of this statement nothing definite is known. Correspondence between the printers' societies practically ceased during the suspension of their trade activities from 1818 to 1828;<sup>39</sup> but after 1828, when the Printers grew aggressive and attempted to bargain collectively, cooperation between the societies began again, and this cooperation soon led to suggestions for a closer alliance. In 1836 a "union of societies" known as the National Typographical Society was formed to carry on the various activities hitherto inadequately maintained by correspondence, but this federal organization died within two years. Undoubtedly other trades attempted about this time to form national unions. Thus, at a meeting of the Journeymen House Carpenters' Association of Philadelphia, in 1836, a resolution was adopted "that a National Convention of Carpenters be called to meet at Philadelphia on the fourth Monday of October ensuing."<sup>40</sup> But after the utter prostration of the labor movement in the panic of 1836, attempts to form national unions were discontinued.

The period of railway construction brought about a great industrial change toward the middle of the century. Lines of railroad now spanned many sections of the country, and in general the means of communication by land and water had been greatly developed; in consequence the mobility of labor had increased, and goods sought a market of ever widening territorial extent. Hence the need of national collective bargaining became more imperative, and after 1850 the number of national trade unions steadily increased. If, therefore, the first half of the century is styled the period of local unionism, the second half may by contrast be called the

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<sup>39</sup> G. E. Barnett, *The Printers*, in *American Economic Association Quarterly*, ser. 3, vol. x, no. 3, p. 21.

<sup>40</sup> *The Washingtonian*, October 17, 1836.

period of national or federal unionism. Trades which had been most active in the labor movement of the first half of the century naturally took the lead in the creation of national associations. The Printers renewed the effort made in 1836, and after two preliminary conventions formed the National Typographical Union, the first permanent federal trade union in the United States. The example of the Printers was followed within a couple of years by the Hatters and by the members of a few other trades which had been foremost in the creation of local unions during the early part of the century.

Workers in the textile, iron and steel, glass, and other industries which had scarcely existed or which remained unorganized during the early period now began to form local societies, and in those where the product had a wide territorial market the creation of national associations followed almost immediately. Thus, the Philadelphia union of glass blowers, probably the first local organization in the trade, began almost immediately after its formation in 1848 to encourage the establishment of unions in other places with a view to forming a federal association. The new local unions joined in turn with the Philadelphia union in sending members to organize glass blowers in nearby communities. When a sufficient number of local unions had been formed, a general convention was called, and the Grand Union of Glassblowers was created in 1858.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, the so-called local "forge" of iron puddlers, known as the Sons of Vulcan, which was organized at Pittsburg in 1857, was quickly followed by the National Forge of the United Sons of Vulcan in 1860.

Many of the national unions formed in the United States during the last fifty or sixty years went to pieces after a brief existence. Very few of the present federal organizations are the first to have been formed in the trade. Frequently they have been preceded by several ephemeral associations which have sometimes been completely forgotten

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<sup>41</sup>J. C. Simonds and J. T. McEnnis, *The Story of Manual Labor in all Lands and Ages*.

by the present generation of workmen. Concerning them, inquiry fails to reveal any information save a casual, often vague, reference to their creation at a certain date. Only fifteen national unions out of forty-three known to have been formed between the years 1850 and 1880 have survived until the present day.<sup>42</sup> The twenty-eight national unions which have perished embraced twenty-one distinct trades. In five trades there was more than one attempt to form a federal union during this period.

The workers in the building trades have had greater difficulty than some other classes of workers in maintaining permanent national unions. The International Union of Bricklayers and Masons has, indeed, been able to maintain a continuous existence from its formation in 1866, and the Soft Stone Cutters and the Granite Cutters have been equally successful. Other members of the building trades, such as the Carpenters, the Painters, the Plumbers, and the Plasterers, have been less fortunate. The Carpenters made two unsuccessful efforts to maintain a national union before the present organization was finally established in 1881.<sup>43</sup> Five unsuccessful attempts were made by the Painters.<sup>44</sup> The present association of plumbers, gas fitters, steam fitters, and steam fitters' helpers was preceded by an earlier organization known as the International Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Steam Fitters, and Gas Fitters, which ceased to exist about 1888. There was also a national union of plasterers in 1866, which became apparently extinct after a short life.

The great difficulty which the building trades have experienced in maintaining national unions may be ascribed partly to the fact that in these crafts collective bargaining is

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<sup>42</sup> Of these fifteen, some have lost their identity by amalgamation with national unions of related trades, others have split into two or more separate associations. Most of the remainder have changed their names once or several times. Few claim jurisdiction over the same class of members as in the beginning.

<sup>43</sup> The Carpenter, October, 1886. See also G. E. McNeill, *The Labor Movement*, p. 355. See also *International Journal [Iron Molders]*, October, 1866, p. 214.

<sup>44</sup> The Carpenter, February, 1882. See also McNeill, pp. 386-388.

conducted locally. The functions of the central organization have been strictly limited, and they have in consequence been loose decentralized bodies which any serious repulse in the struggle with employers is likely to disrupt. Even the exceptions which have been cited prove the rule. The International Union of Bricklayers and Masons, though it has held together nominally from the date of its foundation, has barely escaped dissolution at various times, and during the two years from 1878 to 1880 the regular convention was not held, and the union gave little or no evidence of life. Special conditions have rendered the maintenance of a federal organization of greater importance to the stone cutters than to the members of other building trades. In the first place, the granite cutters and the soft stone cutters, unlike the workers in other building trades, are not producing an article intended primarily or solely for local consumption, since soft stone, as well as granite, is often cut into finished shape at the quarry or some central stone yard, whence it is sent to other places. These trades have therefore found desirable the uniform regulation of the conditions of employment. Moreover, the stone cutters are an extremely mobile body of workers. The construction of some great public work, a dam or a public building, may gather together a large number of them for a few months or even years. When the work is complete, not a single stone cutter may be left in the place.

Industrial depressions have been the chief cause of the dissolution of federal trade unions in the United States. The union men who are thrown out of employment feel themselves unable to pay their dues, and so are suspended from the trade organizations; or, what is worse from a union point of view, many of them, demoralized by unemployment, lose faith in the system of collective bargaining and stand ready to take the places of their fellow-workmen at a wage far below the union scale. To add to the demoralizing influence of the depression, many trade unions, utterly unmindful of the rapidly thinning ranks of organ-

ized labor and of the hundreds who are vainly seeking employment, rush into strikes against reductions in wages. The strike is lost, the funds of the association are exhausted, the men replaced by others join the mass of the unemployed, and the association goes to pieces. The national unions show the effects of the depression more quickly than the local unions, since the strike funds of the national organization are the first to be exhausted, and the local unions which survive the first blast of the industrial storm abandon allegiance to the now impotent central association, and strive to fight on alone. After the depression, the local unions which had dissolved begin to reorganize, and these, together with the survivors, unite again into federal associations.

The depressions which have affected the industries of the United States at periodic intervals divide the history of district, national, and international associations into several stages. The first of these extends from the formation of the National Typographical Union in 1852 to the Civil War, and may be called the experimental period of federal trade unionism. Some five trades—those of the printers, iron molders, stone cutters, machinists and blacksmiths, and hat finishers—succeeded in establishing national associations, more or less permanent in character, though indefinite in purpose and function and very loosely hung together. Unsuccessful attempts to form such central unions were made in this period by the carpenters, locomotive engineers, painters, brushmakers, cotton mule spinners, and glass blowers. The Civil War, with its uncertainties and its interference with the means of communication, paralyzed the federal unions then in existence. After Black Friday of 1861 nearly all of the national unions formed during the preceding ten years went to pieces. Not a single labor organization held a national convention during the year 1862.<sup>45</sup> The Iron Molders' Union of America, which had started on its career so auspiciously in 1859, practically did not exist

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<sup>45</sup> Iron Molders' Journal, April, 1878.

from the middle of 1861 to January, 1863. Many local unions of iron molders collapsed completely during this interval; some adjourned for six months or a year. The few that managed to maintain themselves were not in condition to call a convention. With the revival of business, however, the few societies of the trade which survived found themselves unable to take advantage of the industrial improvement because of the unorganized condition of the molders in other cities. The first impulse of the local union in Philadelphia was, therefore, to call a federal convention at Pittsburgh in January, 1863, but the reorganized national association embraced only fourteen local unions as compared with the forty-three belonging to the union in 1861.

The feverish industrial activity which characterized the period from the close of the Civil War to the panic of 1873 is marked by a correspondingly rapid growth of the labor movement. Local unions were quickly organized by the coachmakers, tailors, carpenters, plasterers, painters, boiler-makers and ship builders, glass blowers, boot- and shoemakers, locomotive engineers, railway conductors, coopers, cigar makers, and members of other trades, and these local unions united into federal associations. One unionist, writing in a trade journal about this time, ventures to predict that in a few years every trade in New York City will be holding its national convention. "There is no reason," says another writer, "why a convention of workmen of any trade or calling should not be able to improve their condition and forward their interests by assembling at least once a year to give expression to their sentiments upon the various questions of importance brought before them. Lawyers, doctors and merchants do it,—why not the workmen?"<sup>46</sup>

Then came the crash, the panic of 1873, and many of the associations which had been formed disappeared. Prior to the panic the Knights of St. Crispin, a national organization of boot and shoe workers, alone had a membership estimated at seventy thousand. Two years later it embraced

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<sup>46</sup> International Journal [Iron Molders], September, 1866, p. 185.

two thousand members, and soon afterwards went to pieces entirely. The total membership of all federal trade unions was estimated in 1875 at only one hundred thousand, distributed among the several associations about as follows:—

Miners .....	35,355
Locomotive Engineers .....	12,000
Printers .....	10,295
Machinists and Blacksmiths .....	8,000
Iron Molders .....	7,500
Coopers .....	5,000
Cigar Makers .....	5,000
Sons of Vulcan .....	4,000
Tailors .....	2,800
Miscellaneous (Bricklayers, Plasterers, Painters, Hat Finishers, Shoe Workers, Horseshoers, Locomotive Firemen, Mule Spinners, and Weavers) .....	10,000
Total .....	99,950

After 1875 the Miners' National Association, with its membership of thirty-five thousand, collapsed completely, as did also the federal unions of tailors, shoemakers, plasterers, painters, and others in the above list. In 1877 the total membership of all national unions probably fell short—perhaps considerably short—of fifty thousand. Only the federal organizations of locomotive engineers, locomotive firemen, iron and steel workers, iron molders, printers, cigar makers, bricklayers, and perhaps those of one or two other trades lived through the period of hard times from 1873 to 1878.<sup>47</sup> The Iron Molders' Union, which had learned much from its experience during the storm and stress of the Civil War period, emerged from the hard times showing comparatively little ill effect. Its membership had been only slightly depleted, and in 1876 a balance still existed in the treasury.<sup>48</sup> "The Iron Molders' Union," says a contemporary account, "alone of all protective unions can be said to be really carrying out the work that its name implies. It is weakened, but is still keeping up the fight."<sup>49</sup> The Printers suffered more severely, but their union was in moderately good condition in 1877. Another antebellum asso-

<sup>47</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, December, 1877, pp. 2, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1876.

<sup>49</sup> Iron Molders' Journal, February, 1877.

ciation, which was composed of iron puddlers, had united with other trades in the industry to form the Amalgamated Iron and Steel Workers in 1876, and this amalgamation was prospering. Two trades organized after the Civil War—the locomotive engineers and the locomotive firemen—were maintaining comparatively strong associations. The Cigar Makers' International Union had, however, almost completely collapsed. The Bricklayers struggled on with little vitality for several years after the revival of industry, and practically did not exist from 1879 to 1881.

From about 1878 to the depression of 1893 the number of national and international trade unions steadily increased. Many trades which during the earlier period had been unable to maintain permanent federal unions now succeeded in establishing them. Other trades not hitherto unionized began to form local unions in many places, and these were united rapidly into federal associations. Industrial conditions were on the whole favorable, since the industrial depression lasting from 1882 to 1885 was slight compared with its predecessor, and exercised but little deterrent influence.

Although the phenomenal growth of the Knights of Labor, an organization which ignored the existing national associations and sought to unite lodges of a manifold variety of trades in one vast federation, misdirected for a time the energies of the labor movement, it also did much to popularize and stimulate it. Moreover, while many of its local and national trade assemblies maintained bitter jurisdictional disputes with existing national associations, other national trade assemblies were formed in trades previously unorganized, or organized only in a few scattered localities. A number of the international associations existing at the present day originated as one of these national trade assemblies. After the decline of the Knights of Labor they seceded to form independent unions. The present National Brotherhood of Operative Potters, for example, was created in 1890 by the secession from the Knights of Labor of the potters constituting District Assembly No. 160. The In-



ternational Brotherhood of Bookbinders is the successor of National Trade Assembly 230. The present international organization of carriage and wagon workers was preceded by the Carriage and Wagon Workers' Trade Assembly No. 247, and the United Garment Workers by District Assembly No. 231.

The increase of federal trade unions was again abruptly checked by the panic of 1893, but the effects were not so disastrous as those of the panic of 1873. Many unions suffered severely from loss of membership, but very few were dissolved. A number of the more centralized associations emerged almost unhurt from the period of hard times. The executive boards of these associations, vested with control over the strike policy of the constituent societies, restrained the local unions from rushing blindly into useless conflicts. During this interval, when the activities of the central associations in collective bargaining were largely in abeyance, the subordinate unions were kept faithful to their allegiance by sick, death, and other benefits.

The years following the depression of the nineties have been prosperous ones in the annals of trade unionism, and have witnessed an unparalleled growth of national and international organizations. Over one hundred and thirty of these associations, most of them possessing jurisdiction over local unions in all parts of North America, are now in existence. Of these, about fifty made their appearance during the years from 1896 to 1905.

The American Federation of Labor, which displaced the Knights of Labor, has been active in forming national and international trade unions. A loose confederation, created and controlled by the existing national unions, it has not, like the Knights, aroused conflict and antagonism. In 1905 one hundred and eighteen of the one hundred and thirty national and international unions belonged to the Federation. Moreover, the number of national associations is being constantly swelled through the efforts of paid agents maintained by the American Federation of Labor. These agents are contin-

ually organizing local unions among the non-union workers in various industries and welding them together into international trade unions.

The influence of the American Federation of Labor has also tended to hasten materially the transition from local to national unionism. Formerly, local unions of a trade existed usually for some years before they were federated, often reluctantly, into national and international associations. Under the influence of the American Federation of Labor the organization of a federal union has sometimes followed almost immediately the appearance of local unions in the craft. When only a few isolated local unions exist in any trade, usually each of them holds a charter direct from the American Federation of Labor; but as soon as enough of these societies have been organized, they are federated into a national or continental union. When, however, the immediate creation of a federal association seems urgently desirable, a national charter is sometimes granted to a single local union, perhaps the sole existing one in the trade, or to a group of promising leaders of the craft. With the assistance of paid organizers of the American Federation, fellow-craftsmen in all parts of the country are induced to form local unions. Soon a convention of representatives from these newly created local societies is held, a framework of government is established, and a full-fledged national or continental association emerges. In only a few trades are the local societies still disunited.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE AREA OF FEDERATION

As a rule, the first federal association formed by the local unions in a trade has been national or international in name and in the proposed extent of its jurisdiction. The national or international associations in a few trades have been preceded, however, by state or district unions. Thus in 1863, some years before the rise of the Coopers' International Union, the coopers of New York formed a state association known at first as the Grand Society and later as the Central Union of New York. When the International Union was organized about 1870, the Central Union of New York, recognizing the greater utility of the wider federation, dissolved at once, and its constituent local unions affiliated themselves with the International Union.<sup>1</sup> The glass bottle blowers were for some years divided into two district unions, one composed of local unions east of Pittsburg and the other of societies west of the Alleghany Mountains; this division was necessary, it is said, because of the expense of sending delegates such long distances. The need for national regulation of the terms of the labor contract led finally to the consolidation of the two districts.<sup>2</sup>

Federal associations confined in jurisdiction to New England have been formed by the workers in a few industries localized largely in that part of the country. The first federal union of mule spinners, formed in 1858, embraced only local organizations of the trade in New England.<sup>3</sup> The federal unions established by boot and shoe lasters in 1885 and by boot and shoe cutters in 1887 had a similar limited

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<sup>1</sup> Coopers' Monthly Journal, October, November, 1870, pp. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Simonds and McEnnis, pp. 629-635.

<sup>3</sup> Constitution and General By-Laws of the United Operative Mule Spinners of New England, Benevolent and Protective Association. Fall River, 1858.

territorial jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup> Local unions of cutters and lasters in other parts of the country asked for admission to these associations, but were refused for several years on the ground that before the jurisdiction was further widened, branches should be established in the unorganized shoe centers of New England. The real reason as now stated by men prominent in these early federations was that the New England lasters and cutters had little to gain by an alliance with members of the trade in other parts of the country. For many years an overwhelming percentage of shoes made in this country were manufactured in New England. Gradually, factories were established in other parts of the country, but the New England manufacturers were still able, notwithstanding the handicap of the additional expense for transportation, to compete in the home markets of these new factories, and if they could not do so, both employers and workmen were very loath to admit their inability. On the other hand, as skilled lasters and cutters were scarce in the Central Atlantic States and the Middle West, a higher rate of wages was paid in the new factories than in New England. The constant influx of workers from the older shoe centers gradually tended, however, to depress these higher wages, so that the cutters and lasters of the Central Atlantic States and of the Middle West were very desirous to protect themselves by federating with their fellow-craftsmen in New England. By 1890 both the lasters and the cutters had widened the jurisdiction of their organizations to include local societies of the trade in any part of the United States.

Among the coal mine workers, district or state unions preceded the formation of national and international associations. Of one great national union there was at that time little need. During the early period of coal mining little or no competition existed between coal operators in different districts. Each coal field or group of adjoining coal fields supplied different markets. Thus, roughly speaking, the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania and the bituminous fields

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<sup>4</sup> The Laster, August 15, 1888, p. 3.

of western Maryland sent their coal chiefly to one of the large seaport cities of the Atlantic coast,—Baltimore, Philadelphia, or New York. The bituminous coal of western Pennsylvania was sent to Pittsburg, whence the surplus not consumed in local industries was, together with the product of eastern Ohio and West Virginia, shipped down the Ohio River to Cincinnati and to points on the lower Mississippi. Coal from the valleys of northern Ohio and from Indiana and Illinois found its way to one of the ports on the Great Lakes. Each district association was able, therefore, to regulate the wages of its members, their hours, and other conditions of employment irrespective of conditions prevailing in coal fields outside its jurisdiction.

On the other hand, since the miners have been a migratory body, mining in Pennsylvania in spring and fall the coal sent down the rivers and in Ohio in summer the coal transported by the Great Lakes, a national travelling card, recognized at all union collieries of the country, has always been regarded as a need.<sup>5</sup> From the beginning a national strike fund has also been greatly desired; but in coal mining, wages constitute such a large part of the cost of production that the equalization of the terms of the labor contract for all competing operators has been of prime importance, and other activities of federal unions of the workers have sunk into comparative insignificance.

About 1860 we find the miners in each coal field or group of competing coal fields organized into district associations. The creation of national unions was attempted, indeed, from the beginning; but, until 1885, when competition began between coal operators in all parts of the United States, the efforts to weld together the various district associations into

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<sup>5</sup> No system of apprenticeship exists among the coal miners. The workers have been recruited from the great mass of shifting, unskilled labor, from farm hands who crowd into the mines during the winter months and compete successfully for employment with the professional miners, from the Slavs and other European immigrants who are now replacing the native Americans in the collieries, and from the children employed about the mines, such as the door boy, the fan boy, and the breaker boy, who rise by successive steps even to the job of fire boss.

one closely knit federation invariably failed. The first national organization concerning which we have definite information was the American Miners' Association. No permanent machinery of government was created for this central association, and except for the maintenance of a national travelling card, recognized in all districts, it had no real functions. Each district union was practically independent, and had no connection with other district unions save to recognize the cards borne by their members. The American Miners' Association went to pieces amid the strikes of 1867 and 1868. The National Miners' and Laborers' Benevolent Association, which appeared about 1871, resembled its predecessor in that it possessed no funds, no machinery of government, no real functions. Each district was again practically an independent association.

The idea of welding the various district unions into one firmly unified federal organization was conceived by John Siney, who had risen into prominence during the early movement in the anthracite region. As a result of efforts made by him, the Miners' National Association was formed in 1873.<sup>6</sup> This organization, unlike its predecessors, was more than a mere name. A central strike fund was established; conventions made up of delegates from the district unions were held yearly; and permanent paid officers, who established the headquarters of the national union at Cleveland, were elected.<sup>7</sup> But the Miners' National Association had only a brief existence. It reached the zenith of its power in 1875, and went to pieces in that year after a series of disastrous strikes. During the decade following the disappearance of this association no national union of coal workers existed. Two unsuccessful attempts were made to establish one, but neither of the proposed associations was formed. Meantime the miners were busily engaged in strengthening their state and district unions.

Gradually the development of the great railway systems

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<sup>6</sup> National Labor Tribune, November 21, 1873, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> First Annual Report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Agriculture for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1874, pp. 532-537.

of the country and the growth of transportation facilities upon the Great Lakes were bringing all the bituminous coal fields of the United States into competition with each other. For example, part of the coal of western Pennsylvania was now sent from Pittsburg to the East, where it competed in the tide-water markets with the output from the mines of Maryland, West Virginia, and central Pennsylvania. Part was sent to Cleveland, whence, together with the coal from northern Ohio, it was transported by way of the Great Lakes until it met in competition the coal of the States to the northwest. Part was shipped down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, competing with the coal of southern Ohio, Iowa, Indian Territory, and other States to the south and west. "Circumstances at the time of the formation of the Miners' National Association," wrote the secretary of the Coal Miners' Beneficial and Protective Association of Western Pennsylvania in 1883, "were not so favorable to the creation of an interstate federation as they are now; the facilities for transportation were not so highly developed, and competition from distant territories was less to be feared. Now the coal producing districts are indirectly, if not directly competitors to the farthest extreme, and though the coal fields of two states may have different markets, there is always some territory with which both compete in common; and the indiscriminate cutting of prices in one region is often followed by reductions in distant places."<sup>8</sup>

Keenly alive to the changed conditions, the presidents of the several state associations issued in September, 1885, the call for the interstate convention which gave birth to the National Federation of Miners and Mine Laborers. "Local, district and state organization," declared the preamble to the constitution of the new national union, "have done much towards ameliorating the condition of our craft in the past; but today neither district nor state unions can regulate the markets to which their coal is shipped. We know this to our sorrow. In a federation of all lodges and branches of

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<sup>8</sup> National Labor Tribune, January 13, 1883, p. 5.

miners' unions lies our only hope." Ever since 1885 a loose national federation of miners has existed, though it has threatened sometimes to break apart into the constituent district unions.

The district unions did not always disappear upon the formation of a national union in the trade. On the contrary, they have been retained by the national organizations as important governmental units. The primary purpose of the district unions in forty-two out of eighty-five trades which provide for them in the constitution of their federal associations is to render the conditions of employment uniform throughout the territory over which they have jurisdiction.<sup>9</sup> When the competition between employers is not national but is confined to a limited area, such as a single city, a group of adjacent towns or cities, or a wider stretch of territory, district unions corresponding to such limited competitive areas are needed to equalize wages and other conditions of employment. For this reason Carpenters, Bricklayers, Barbers, Bill Posters, Hotel and Restaurant Employees, and other unions with local markets have formed district unions to unite the several societies of the trade in the same or adjacent places.

Even though the market for a commodity be national, regulation of the conditions of employment by the district union may be necessary, since differences in cost of living, cost of raw materials, interest on capital, and methods of production may render uniform regulation for the entire country impracticable. Moreover, even when the terms of the labor contract are fixed nationally, detailed supplementary regulation by the district unions is often necessary. Thus, during the existence of national agreements between the Iron Molders and their employers from about 1891 to 1904, the Iron Molders' Conference Board of New York and Vicinity maintained supplementary agreements with

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<sup>9</sup> Undoubtedly district unions exist in some of the trades whose international associations make no provision for them in the constitution, as, for example, in the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers who have formed the District Council of House-smiths and Bridgemen in New York and Vicinity.



employers, which did not conflict, however, in their terms with either the national agreements or the rules of the international union.

Another purpose of the district association is to unite all those local unions which will be affected by a strike. The strike of locomotive engineers on one part of a railway system affects all other engineers on that system. The strike begun in one establishment is likely to spread to other industrial establishments in the same city. As a rule the district union unites the workers who are liable to be included in a strike, and, therefore, its consent must usually be obtained before a conflict with employers can be begun. Even when there are no district unions, some national associations require that the consent of all local unions in a community be obtained before any one of them is permitted to strike.

Many district associations maintain a joint fund for the payment of strike benefits or the support of business agents and other officials. Thus, since no one of the local unions of cotton mule spinners in Rhode Island was able to pay the salary of a business representative or occupy his time completely, they have all united into a state association to maintain jointly a paid agent. It is quite common in the building trades for a single official to serve as business agent for all local unions represented in the council of the district union. Nine of the eighty-five international organizations which require the formation of district unions provide that each of the district unions shall maintain a business agent, and two of the nine contribute one half of his salary.<sup>10</sup>

Frequently administrative and judicial functions of the international unions are delegated to the officers of the district unions. Because of their familiarity with the district these officials are able to perform such duties very efficiently. Thus in thirty-three out of eighty-five associations the officials of the district unions are required to make some attempt at conciliation before the application of a local society for strike benefits may be submitted to the international organ-

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<sup>10</sup> The Blacksmiths and Helpers and the Machinists.

ization. This intermediation by an outside party not embittered by participation in the dispute leads to the peaceful settlement of many petty grievances, and also saves the international officers from journeying to the locality in order to adjust the difficulty. When a strike has been declared, district officials, the joint executive committee, or a specially appointed committee for the district assumes direction of it, assigns the pickets to their duties, collects funds, pays benefits, and reports from time to time regarding the progress of the strike to the international association.

Sometimes the district officials are required to enforce the observance of international rules and to make periodic examination of the methods of administration in the local unions. Their constant presence in the district enables them to perform this service more effectively than international officials could. Eleven of the above-mentioned eighty-five international unions delegate part of their judicial power to the district board or to some district official. In eight of them the district authorities may consider charges against the local unions as well as against members,<sup>11</sup> but in three others they may consider only cases in which members alone are involved.<sup>12</sup> The district committee, which can call witnesses and personally cross-examine them, is better able to determine the merits of a case than are the international officials, who must secure their evidence from the written statements of the two parties to the dispute. The local unions and individual members are protected by the right of appeal from the district to the international union.

The territorial jurisdiction of the district federations varies widely. The most common are the so-called joint councils, district councils, or district advisory boards which unite the local unions in the same city. During the period following the Civil War, before a national association of painters existed, the five or six societies of the trade in

<sup>11</sup> Blast Furnace Workers, Bricklayers and Masons, Garment Workers, Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, Painters, Decorators and Paper Hangers, Seamen, Teamsters, and Tin Plate Workers.

<sup>12</sup> Hotel and Restaurant Employees, Interior Freight Handlers, and Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen.

New York City were united by a joint council.<sup>13</sup> Joint councils of Bricklayers and of other trades were formed about the same time in New York and other large cities where the overgrown local union had been split into several societies.<sup>14</sup> Of eighty-five international organizations which require the formation of district unions, forty-one provide solely for the creation of joint councils limited in jurisdiction to a single city, and thirty-six for larger district associations whose control extends over all or part of several States. The remaining eight international unions have established both joint councils of local unions in the same city and district associations of wider territorial jurisdiction.

When several cities, such as New York, Jersey City, and Hoboken, lie in close proximity to one another, the societies in these adjoining places frequently combine to form a single joint council. Such a joint council of all unions of cigar makers in New York, Jersey City, Hoboken, Brooklyn, and Williamsburg was formed as early as 1881.<sup>15</sup> These inter-urban councils are needed in the first place because even in industries with a local patronage keen competition exists between employers in adjacent cities. In addition, journeymen often live in one town and work in another, but prefer to be members of the local union in the town where they reside. In the building trades the place of employment shifts frequently from one to another of a series of adjacent towns, and to compel a journeyman to change his affiliation to a new local society every time he goes to work in such adjacent cities would cause him serious inconvenience. The bricklayers' unions of New York City, finding that they were unable to prevent fellow-craftsmen working in outside towns from being employed in New York City, decided about 1887 to form a joint council of all local organizations of the trade within a radius of seven miles of the city.<sup>16</sup> Some years later, however, by an agreement with the

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<sup>13</sup> International Journal [Iron Molders], November, 1866, p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., December, 1866, p. 280.

<sup>15</sup> Proceedings, 1881.

<sup>16</sup> Constitution and Rules of Order, 1887.

Mason Builders' Association, which gave preference in employment to the New York bricklayers, the New York local unions succeeded in preventing members of unions outside of New York from securing work in the city.<sup>17</sup> The joint conference was then dissolved. On the conference board of the Iron Molders and on that of the Machinists in New York and vicinity are represented all local unions in the towns lying within a radius of sixty miles of New York City. In several trades joint councils have been formed to unite the local societies in the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, in Boston and its surrounding suburban towns, and in groups of adjacent small towns such as Cohoes, Albany, and Troy.

The primary functions of joint councils of local unions are the maintenance of uniform conditions of employment and the control over the declaration and conduct of strikes. The international unions have used them only to a very slight extent as administrative units. Only four hold the joint councils definitely responsible for the maintenance of honest administration and the observance of international rules by the local unions. Only two have vested them with judicial power.

The Typographical Union, the United Sons of Vulcan, the Iron Molders, the Cigar Makers, and other early federal associations attempted to federate the local unions in each State, but these attempts usually failed. In the first place, the competitive area in which uniform regulation of employment is needed is seldom identical with a State but may include a part of one or parts of several States. Secondly, in one State there may be only three or four local unions of the trade; in another, fifty or more. Even for purposes of administration such divisions are usually inadequate. All of the early international unions mentioned above very soon abandoned their efforts to form state associations. At present nine international unions make provision in their con-

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<sup>17</sup> Thirty-first Annual Report of the President and the Secretary, 1896; Thirty-second Annual Report of the President and the Secretary, 1897.

stitutions for state associations. The membership in seven of these organizations is distributed fairly well in all cities and many towns and villages throughout the country.<sup>18</sup> In the National Association of Post Office Clerks the function of the state union is to organize new locals, in the other six to maintain uniform hours, wages, and other working conditions. The Locomotive Firemen and Locomotive Engineers have created state associations in order to obtain state legislation affecting the interests of railway employees. District unions of an entirely different character are used by them for collective bargaining.

Twenty-four international associations divide the territory under their jurisdiction into districts of variable size. In a number of unions the New England States constitute a single district. The International Seamen's Union follows the coast lines and inland waters in marking off its districts. One of its district unions claims jurisdiction over all seamen on the Atlantic Coast; another, over all seamen working on the Great Lakes, and the third, over those working on the Pacific Coast. The districts in the International Pilots' Association are similar. The state and district unions of coal miners which existed before the creation of a national federation of the trade have been retained by the United Mine Workers of America. These state and district unions embrace all miners in the same coal field or in a group of coal fields having common shipping points. Sometimes they are further subdivided into districts which embrace the miners working in one section of a large coal field or in a group of mines under the same management.

The district associations with broad territorial jurisdiction are used by thirteen of the above twenty-four international unions solely for administrative purposes. One of the vice-presidents of the international union is usually stationed in each district and serves as its executive head. Other international associations maintaining large district unions use

<sup>18</sup> These are the Bricklayers, Granite Cutters, Stone Cutters, Horse-shoers, Post Office Clerks, Stationary Engineers, and Stationary Firemen.

them for collective bargaining as well as for administrative purposes.

Eight organizations of railway employees group all lodges on the same railway system into district unions. Each lodge along the system has a representative on the general committee of adjustment. When the members of a lodge work on several railway systems, the lodge may have a representative on the committees of adjustment of each system by which its members are employed. When a railway system is divided into two or more divisions or departments, each with its own manager under control of the general manager of the system, the railway employees form district unions to correspond. A general committee of adjustment is created for each division or department, and these several committees of adjustment elect representatives to a general committee of adjustment for the entire system. Part of the members of the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Helpers and the International Association of Machinists work in railway shops, part are employed in general repair shops or in large machine shops. Both groups of workers are often organized together in the same local union. All blacksmiths or machinists working on the same railway system are, like other railroad employees, united through their representatives on the general committees of adjustment. Blacksmiths or machinists in the machine or repair shops belong to the district union with jurisdiction over the territory in which they are working.

Some of the organizations which permit the establishment of only one local union in a city allow local unions to have branches. These branches are entirely dominated by the parent society, and exist only at its discretion. The national union of carpenters and joiners, desirous of maintaining unity of action between the members of the trade in each community, at first chartered only one union in each place, but allowed a local union to establish branches. The branches, though holding meetings in convenient parts of the city, were kept in complete subordination to the parent local.

Naturally, they were dissatisfied with their position, and in 1886 the system was abolished.<sup>19</sup>

The linotype machine tenders employed in the printing industry in New York City were organized for a time as a branch of the local union of compositors. From the beginning the International Typographical Union has permitted only one local union in each branch of the trade to be chartered in any city. It desired control, however, over the machine tenders, who formerly had independent societies of their own. Since the absorption of the machine tenders by the Typographical Union, only one branch of machine tenders, namely, that in New York City, has been in existence. In all other places they have been absorbed into the local unions of compositors. The branch in New York was strictly controlled by the union of compositors, Local Union No. 6, to which all dues were paid and without whose consent no funds could be expended. The branch held a meeting each month immediately prior to the meetings of Local Union No. 6, in order that any course of action which it proposed might be referred promptly to the parent local. Members of the branch might attend the meetings of Local Union No. 6. The branch had one representative on the conference board which bargained with the employers and one representative on the executive board of the local union.

The branch has been used by a few organizations as a method of organizing the members of the trade in those places where they are not sufficiently numerous to maintain a society. In most unions isolated members are attached as individuals to the nearest local unions, and they have the same privileges and duties as any other members. On account of the distance, however, they are usually unable to attend its meetings, and, unless the local union makes particular efforts to bring questions to their attention, lose all voice in determining the policies of the organization. In the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union and a few other unions isolated journeymen do not belong to any local society, but

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<sup>19</sup> Constitution, 1886.

are attached to the headquarters of the international association as members-at-large. They pay dues directly to headquarters, are entitled to all international benefits, and may vote only on questions submitted to all the members of the union. Under either system the isolated journeyman has little voice in the affairs of the association. The chief advantages of membership to him are apparently that he remains eligible to sick, death, and other international benefits, and that when he travels in search of work he is admitted to any local union without payment of an initiation fee.

The United Brewery Workmen and a few other unions have endeavored to confer a limited degree of selfgovernment upon small groups of isolated members by organizing them as branches of the nearest local society. The members of the branch pay to the parent local union their monthly dues and assessments and are permitted to attend its meetings. If not near enough to attend, they may hold separate meetings at which they may vote on all matters under consideration by other members of the local union. They can make no contracts with employers nor take any other action without the consent of the society with which they are affiliated. When bridge and structural iron workers who are members of a union in some large city are sent away to perform work in some isolated community, they are usually permitted to organize themselves as a branch of the local union in the city from which they come.

The machine textile workers perform a highly specialized work and have no local unions. Only a few are found in each mill, and in no community are they sufficiently numerous to maintain a society. As in other trades, the members in each shop hold meetings occasionally. They elect a shop collector and a grievance committee to bargain with their employer. The national association groups the shops under its jurisdiction into four district unions. In the eastern district are included all shops in the State of Rhode Island and in the adjoining portions of Massachusetts and Con-



necicut; in the western district, the shops in and around New York City; in the northern district, the shops in and around Boston, and in the southern district, the shops in and around Philadelphia. At the head of each district there are two directors and a secretary. Meetings of all members in the district are held regularly at some central point.

The Seamen have adopted a modified form of the branch system suited to their peculiar needs. Because of the roving character of the sailor's life, they cannot be attached to a particular local union. The seamen of the Atlantic Coast are organized into a single district union with headquarters in Boston. At each port there is a branch in charge of an agent. The members belong to the district organization, not to a branch, but may take part in the meetings of the branch at any port where they may be stopping. No branch can declare a strike, expel a member, or take any other independent action. All matters of any importance must be referred to a vote of the district. Even the agent in charge of a branch is not elected by those present at one of its meetings, but by a vote of the members of the entire district. In fact, the branch is merely a convenient point of call for the members in journeying up and down the coast, where they can pay their dues to the district union and register their vote on matters under discussion by the district. Save in these few exceptional instances the system of branches has been impracticable. Each member is affiliated directly with the nearest local union, and unity of action between adjacent local unions is maintained by federating them into district unions.

In the great majority of trades there has not been, as has been the case among the coal mine workers, a gradual expansion of the unit of government from local to district and from district to national unions. On the contrary, almost invariably the first federal organization of the craft has borne the title "National" or "International" union, and has claimed jurisdiction over all local societies of the trade

in the United States or on the whole continent of America. Usually, however, these so-called national or international unions have been able in the beginning to organize subordinate societies in only a few of the more important centers of the industry. Though the first federal organization of machinists and blacksmiths, formed in 1859, bore the ambitious title of "Grand Union of Machinists and Blacksmiths of North America," it had members in only four cities, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Reading, Pennsylvania, and Wilmington, Delaware. The territorial jurisdiction of the association expanded rapidly, however, and at the convention of 1860 delegates were present from cities in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Virginia, Michigan, Kentucky, and Massachusetts.<sup>20</sup> The Granite Cutters' International Association originated among four local unions of granite cutters working in the quarries of Maine, but within the year had spread over New England and beyond into New York, Virginia, and Missouri.<sup>21</sup>

The territorial jurisdiction of the early national organizations, especially those established prior to the Civil War, was confined chiefly to New England, the Middle Atlantic States, and the States of the Middle West. During the Civil War the few scattered branches in the South were lost to the central associations. Since the Civil War, with the rise of a new industrial South, branches have been established in ever increasing numbers by national trade unions in that part of the country. In the years immediately succeeding the war we find the Iron Molders' Union rapidly extending its jurisdiction into Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Kansas, Texas, and California.<sup>22</sup> In 1871 the president of the Ma-

<sup>20</sup> In March, 1860, there occurred a large strike in the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia. At once the officers of the so-called national union communicated with unaffiliated societies of the trade in other cities in order to prevent their members from coming to Philadelphia to act as strike breakers. The strike failed, but as a result of the correspondence and agitation on the part of the national officers the organization spread north, south, east, and west (*Machinists and Blacksmiths' Journal*, March, June, 1872).

<sup>21</sup> *Granite Cutters' Journal*, August, 1877, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Report of the International President, in *Proceedings*, 1867.

chinists' and Blacksmiths' International Union made a trip through the South, and organized local unions in Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, and Mississippi.<sup>23</sup>

Within recent years the territorial jurisdiction of the new national unions as well as of the older ones has been extended rapidly over the South and over the States west of the Mississippi. Since 1890, miners in the outlying coal fields of the South and the Far West have been brought under the banner of the United Mine Workers of America. In the South the miners of Kentucky and Tennessee were early formed into a subordinate district union. In some of the western States such as Kansas and Colorado, where the yield of coal has been small and the coal has been used primarily for local consumption, the workers have been slow to organize, and when organized have remained apart in independent district unions. But these western coal fields have greatly increased their yield and have begun also to encroach on each other's markets. At the same time, the competition in coal between the States lining the opposite banks of the Mississippi River has formed the connecting link between the East and the West.<sup>24</sup> In 1893, therefore, we find the organizers of the United Mine Workers of America welding into subordinate districts of the national union the coal miners of Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, and other western States.<sup>25</sup> The movement culminated in 1894 when the miners of eleven States and one Territory obeyed the orders of the central association to suspend work.<sup>26</sup> The ensuing industrial depression checked the further territorial growth of the national union, and ultimately destroyed the outlying district unions. During the period of recovery from 1896 to 1898 only the coal miners of the central district and of Kentucky and Tennessee

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<sup>23</sup> Machinists and Blacksmiths' Journal, April, 1871, p. 183.

<sup>24</sup> P. H. Penna, "History of Conditions in Colorado and Kansas," in United Mine Workers' Journal, April 27, 1893.

<sup>25</sup> Report of the President, in United Mine Workers' Journal, April 13, 1893.

<sup>26</sup> Report of the Fifth Annual Convention, 1894; United Mine Workers' Journal, April 19, 1894, p. 2. See also *ibid.*, May 3, June 14, 1894.

remained under the control of the national union. The United Mine Workers were for a time checked in their effort to gain control over the territory west of the Mississippi by a rival organization, the Western Federation of Miners, which claimed jurisdiction over the coal workers as well as the miners of gold, silver, lead, and other metals. At present, however, the United Mine Workers have subordinate lodges in many outlying coal fields, even in such newly developed ones as those of Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Washington, and British Columbia.

Certain so-called national unions have still a very limited territorial jurisdiction because the industries in which their members work are localized in one small portion of the country.<sup>27</sup> The National Mule Spinners' Association of America has not a single branch outside of New England. The reason is that, except in some of the older textile centers, the ring frame, which can be easily managed by women and children, is replacing the mule. Mule spinners are seldom found, therefore, in the southern cotton mills or, indeed, in any of the newer textile centers, but are employed chiefly in Fall River, New Bedford, and a few other New England towns. The elastic goring weavers form another vanishing craft, wholly confined to New England. They make the elastic goring used for congress shoes, which are now rapidly disappearing. In 1904 the federal union of the trade embraced only six branches in various New England towns; and in 1906 the Elastic Goring Weavers' Amalgamated Association of the United States of America consisted of two branches located in Brockton and Easthampton, and had a total membership of about ninety.<sup>28</sup> The table knife grinders are employed in an industry almost entirely localized in New England, and the Table Knife Grinders' National Union has consisted of about eight branches in various small towns of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The

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<sup>27</sup> See page 57.

<sup>28</sup> Report of Branches of Elastic Goring Weavers' Amalgamated Association of the United States for month ending January 31, 1904; MS. Annual Report of the General Secretary, 1906.

jurisdiction of the Amalgamated Lace Operatives of America is similarly limited because the lace industry is concentrated, with the exception of one factory in Rhode Island, in East Philadelphia and a few small towns of eastern Pennsylvania.

On the other hand, a wide territorial jurisdiction is attained by the federal unions of such trades as building mechanics, printers, bakers, and machinists, which can be found in every town and even in many villages in all parts of the country. In 1891 the secretary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners was able to report that his organization, which at the time of its origin ten years before had consisted of local unions in eleven of the more important cities of the East and the Middle West, embraced seven hundred and ninety-eight locals, situated in every State and Territory of the United States except Alaska.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the International Typographical Union and the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union have branches in every important city of the United States.

Very early in the history of federal trade unions in the United States their jurisdiction was extended over local organizations of the craft in Canada. The federal union of soft stone cutters, which was formed in 1853, bore in 1858 the name "Journeyman Stone Cutters of the United States and Canada," and possessed jurisdiction over local societies of the trade not only in the United States, but also in Toronto and Hamilton, Canada.<sup>30</sup> Other trades, like the bricklayers or granite cutters, desiring to create a federal organization which should embrace local unions of the craft anywhere on the continent of America, adopted at the first convention such titles as "International Union," or "Association of North America," though Canadian unions were not admitted to some of them until many years later.

While the American workmen have always desired trade-

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<sup>29</sup> The Carpenter, August, 1891.

<sup>30</sup> Circular of the Journeyman Stone Cutters' Association of the United States and Canada, April, May, 1858.

union amalgamation with their Canadian fellow-craftsmen, many Canadian workmen have favored the creation of separate national unions. Until recently the movement for separate national unions made little headway, partly because very few trades in Canada had a sufficient number of local organizations to maintain satisfactorily separate national unions. Prior to 1900 probably less than three hundred local unions, with a total membership of not more than fifteen thousand, existed in the whole Dominion of Canada. Of the societies affiliated with international associations, the five railway brotherhoods claimed the larger portion. Few of the international unions possessed more than one or two Canadian branches. Since 1900 the trade-union movement in Canada has advanced rapidly. In 1902 the Canadian unions numbered eleven hundred, an increase of eight hundred in three years; and the membership aggregated about one hundred thousand. Two years later there were one thousand five hundred and sixty-seven local unions.<sup>31</sup> In the city of Toronto alone the number of local unions increased from forty-eight to one hundred and eighteen between 1900 and 1902.<sup>32</sup> Since 1902 the membership of Canadian unions has grown at the rate of about five thousand a year. Unions are being reorganized even in the newly developed regions of Manitoba and the Northwest Territory, and in British Columbia over two hundred local unions had been formed in 1905. With the growth of the Canadian labor movement the spirit of nationalism, as opposed to internationalism, assumed new life.

The center of the national trade-union movement in Canada has been the longer settled Province of Quebec, where the French element predominates and French is the language chiefly spoken. In Montreal and Quebec the English-speaking workmen are in a hopeless minority. Realizing their inability to influence the policy of the union, they largely remain apart from the labor movement. In Montreal

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<sup>31</sup> *Shoe Workers' Journal*, October, 1902, p. 14.

<sup>32</sup> *American Federationist*, December, 1903, p. 1283; December, 1904, p. 1075.

there are, indeed, local unions composed wholly of English-speaking machinists and printers. A few local unions with a mixed membership of both English and French workers have also been organized, but most of the unions are composed entirely of French Canadians. These French Canadians are not in sympathy with the international trade-union movement. Their passionate fondness for their traditions and their loyalty to the French language isolate them to a considerable extent from the English-speaking people of the United States and Canada. The desire of the Canadian premier for "a united people, who are Canadians first and foremost and French and English only incidentally," has not yet been attained; and one manifestation of this lack of unity is the presence of independent local unions in Montreal and Quebec.<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, in the Province of Ontario, settled largely by English or American immigrants, the policy of internationalism has always been favored. That province has felt most strongly the influence of the labor movement in the United States. In fact, the Canadian branches of the international unions were confined for many years almost wholly to Ontario, particularly to the cities of Toronto and Hamilton. Moreover, Ontario has always been the best organized part of Canada; and today nearly one half of the local unions in the Dominion are located in that province. The workers in the provinces of Western Canada, which are now being industrially developed, are also English-speaking. Their unions have been founded largely by organizers from the United States, and they are heartily in sympathy with the international movement.

The national trade-union movement in Canada has received encouragement from the clergy and from the manufacturers. In some instances the manufacturers have even forced their employees to withdraw from the international unions and join the Canadian associations of the trade. For example, the shoe manufacturers of Montreal have for-

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<sup>33</sup> American Federationist, October, 1903, p. 1034.

bidden their workers' to belong to the branches which the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union has established in that city, and have urged them to join the independent Canadian organizations of shoemakers.<sup>34</sup> The manufacturers are in favor of "national unionism" partly, perhaps, because they wish the Canadian workers to patronize goods bearing a national instead of an international label. Largely, however, their attitude is ascribable to the fear of the strong financial and moral support and assistance extended in time of strike by the international unions to their Canadian branches. American labor leaders argue that the motives of the manufacturers are not wholly patriotic, since many who are enthusiastic advocates of national trade unionism have affiliated themselves with the Canadian branches of international manufacturers' associations.

The fight against the international unions culminated in 1903 with the introduction into the Canadian Senate of a bill which provided that any person not a British subject who incited Canadian workmen to engage in a strike would be guilty of an indictable offence, punishable by two years' imprisonment.<sup>35</sup> Interference in local affairs by trade-union officials from over the border, particularly at the time of a strike, has been especially irritating to the Canadian manufacturers, whose influence was added to that of the national unionists in favor of the bill. The measure failed, however, to pass.<sup>36</sup>

The national unionists in Canada desire to form a general federation of trades which shall be independent of the

<sup>34</sup> Shoe Workers' Journal, August, 1902, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> Official Journal [Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen], July, 1903, p. 31; American Federationist, June, 1903, p. 469; December, 1903, p. 1283.

<sup>36</sup> The bill read as follows: "The Criminal Code, 1892, is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section 524: 'Every one is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to two years imprisonment who, being a person not a British subject, whether residing in or out of Canada, does in Canada incite, urge, or induce workmen, by any act or means whatsoever, to quit any employment in which they may be engaged, or to enter upon any strike with the object of enforcing additional wages or terms of employment from their employer.'"



American Federation of Labor. The Dominion Trades and Labor Congress, which has been in existence since 1884, is a branch of the American Federation of Labor, and bears substantially the same relation to it as do the state federations of labor in the United States. Its primary function is the promotion in Canada of legislation favorable to workmen.<sup>87</sup> Until 1902 the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress admitted to representation not only local branches of the international trade unions, but also independent Canadian associations and local assemblies of the Knights of Labor. In that year, however, a rule was adopted excluding these local assemblies and independent trade unions, whereupon the associations outlawed by the congress formed an independent National Federation of Trades, and established local labor federations in a few cities such as Montreal and Quebec. There do exist in Canada, nevertheless, two national associations whose affiliation with corresponding organizations in the United States is not desired and is not perhaps possible, and these are allowed representation in the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress. They are the Federated Association of Letter Carriers of Canada, composed of government employees, and the National Association of Marine Engineers of Canada, whose members are under strict government regulation.<sup>88</sup>

The same economic forces which led to the formation of national unions in the United States seem likely to bring about the ultimate triumph of the continental trade-union movement in North America. While goods of Canadian manufacture are not largely imported into the United States, American products compete with those of home manufacture in the markets of Canada. The pioneer factories of a

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<sup>87</sup> In 1903 the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress applied to the American Federation of Labor for sole power to issue charters to local federations of trades in Canada. This request was refused as being opposed to the spirit of complete internationalism. The American Federation of Labor requires, however, that the central labor unions which it establishes in various cities of Canada shall become affiliated with the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress.

<sup>88</sup> Report of Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, 1903, pp. 18, 19, 42, 47, 51.

newly developing Canadian industry are often manned with trained workers from the United States. American workmen are also imported into the Dominion to act as strike breakers. On the other hand, the French Canadian shoemakers have been pouring into New England for some years. Local unions of lasters in such centers of shoe manufacturing as Marlboro or Haverhill reported in 1890 that one half of the membership consisted of French Canadians. In fact, because of the inferior skill of the Canadian lasters, the Lasters' Protective Union of the United States was led to seek control over the Canadian unions of the trade for the purpose of regulating the rules of apprenticeship prevailing in the shoe factories of the Dominion.<sup>39</sup>

The national movement in Canada has never attained great proportions. According to one estimate, of fifteen hundred local trade unions in Canada thirteen hundred were affiliated in 1903 with continental associations.<sup>40</sup> The war against nationalism has been waged with considerable force even in such strongholds of the movement as Montreal and Quebec. Many of the independent unions in Montreal have allied themselves with the international trade unions, and all new unions have been chartered as branches of these continental associations. In 1902, after an independent existence of some years, the Longshoremen's Union of Montreal, with thirty-five hundred members, the largest local union in Canada, joined the international union of the trade.<sup>41</sup> The Federated Trades and Labor Council of Montreal, which began life about 1899 as a branch of the American Federation of Labor with representation from four local unions of different trades, now claims jurisdiction over fifty local unions with a total membership of twenty-five thousand.<sup>42</sup>

Probably the sharpest struggle to gain an entrance into Montreal has been waged by the international union of the boot and shoe workers. There are several large shoe fac-

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<sup>39</sup> The Laster, May 15, July 15, August 15, 1890.

<sup>40</sup> Official Journal [Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen], June, 1903, pp. 1-3.

<sup>41</sup> Shoe Workers' Journal, September, 1902, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> American Federationist, October, 1903, p. 1035.

tories in Montreal, and the city is one of the most important shoe centers in Canada. For some years the shoe workers of Montreal were organized into independent unions. When, in 1901, the international union of the boot and shoe workers established a branch in Montreal, the independent societies combined for more effectual resistance against this invasion under the title "Canadian Federation of Shoemakers."<sup>43</sup> The independents were aided by the manufacturers, who forced some of the journeymen to abandon the international union and join the Canadian Federation of Shoemakers. Notwithstanding this opposition, the international union had succeeded by 1902 in organizing four local branches of shoemakers, and by 1903 six branches had been formed; but the four independent unions of the trade in Montreal still maintained their existence.

The city of Quebec remains the stronghold of the independent movement. As yet no Federated Trades and Labor Council has been established in Quebec by the American Federation of Labor. The city is the headquarters of the independent national federation of trades, and at a meeting of this body held there in 1903, forty-two of its independent local societies were represented.

Mexico is still in the early stage of industrial development, and branches have been established there by only a few international associations. The federal trade unions which have organized local unions in Mexico are the associations of railway employees and members of building trades and other crafts which form, in a new country, the advance guard of industrial invasion. Recently an attempt has been made to extend the jurisdiction of the North American unions over the outlying possessions of the United States—Alaska, the Canal Zone, and the islands of Porto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners has local branches in Porto Rico and Hawaii. The International Typographical Union has branches in Porto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska. The

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<sup>43</sup> Shoe Workers' Journal, August, 1902, p. 21; Proceedings, 1904, pp. 69, 97.

Machinists' International Union has organized subordinate divisions in Porto Rico and the Canal Zone, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has chartered a branch in the Philippines.

The efforts which have been made to bring the workers in the outlying possessions of the United States into the labor movement of the continent have been most successful in Porto Rico. Local unions have been established on the island by the international unions of cigar makers, long-shoremen, painters, decorators and paperhangers, carpenters and joiners, machinists, printers, and others. During 1904 forty-two branch societies of the various continental associations were organized, and since then the growth of the movement has steadily continued. The American Federation of Labor has issued charters to local associations of agricultural and other workers, and has established central labor unions or city federations of trades at San Juan, Ponce, and other places. All Porto Rican labor organizations affiliated with international unions are united together in the "Federacion Libre" or Free Federation of Workmen, which corresponds to the state branches of the American Federation of Labor. There is a rival federation of trades known as the "Federacion Regional," but all of the unions which compose it are confined apparently to San Juan. During the visit of Mr. Gompers to the island in 1904 he endeavored to bring about an amalgamation of the two federations, but was unsuccessful. Officials of the American Federation of Labor say that the Federacion Regional is not a bona fide labor organization, but is designed partly for political purposes, and is engineered by certain local politicians.<sup>44</sup>

In the Hawaiian Islands practically all the white mechanics of Honolulu are members of local unions affiliated with international associations of the North American continent, and these local unions are allied into a trades' council maintained by the American Federation of Labor. But Chinese

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<sup>44</sup> American Federationist, April, 1904, pp. 293-297; May, 1904, p. 415; December, 1904, p. 1076.

and Japanese are now rapidly taking the places of the whites in every trade. In consequence, the white mechanics are rapidly leaving the island, and the trade-union movement is declining, so that the total membership of ten local organizations affiliated with the Honolulu Trades and Labor Council in May, 1901, had by May, 1903, shrunk from about five hundred to one hundred and eighty-seven.<sup>45</sup>

The conquest of the Philippine Islands by the United States brought to the Filipino workers the conception of trade unionism. In 1899, shortly after the American invasion, they made their first attempt to organize unions, and societies of barbers, cigar makers, tobacco workers, carpenters, wood workers, painters, lithographers, and others rapidly appeared. A few groups of American workmen who had been attracted to the islands after the annexation organized themselves as branches of the trade unions at home. The Filipinos have avoided all alliances with the North American associations. They have not imitated the American method of forming federations of the local societies of each trade and of further federating the federations into general labor unions. All their local societies are united irrespective of trade divisions into the Democratic Labor Union of the Philippines. Agents of the American Federation of Labor have endeavored to persuade them to adopt the American method of organization and affiliate themselves with the continental unions, but so far the Filipinos have held aloof.<sup>46</sup>

An ideal of the trade unionists is ultimately to unite the workers of the world into vast international bodies. Socialism is a world movement, then why not trade unionism? Not in America alone, but in Europe and Australasia as well national unions are expanding into continental associations. International Workingmen's Congresses are held in Europe frequently, and the closest cooperation often exists between the trade unions of the various countries. The

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<sup>45</sup> American Federationist, December, 1903, p. 1269.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., October, 1903, pp. 1021-1031.

workers of New South Wales, Victoria, West Australia, South Australia, and Queensland hold an Australasian Trade Union Congress at periodic intervals, and though united action is hindered, as in the case of strikes, by the existence of compulsory arbitration in some states, a close federation of the trade unions in all Australasia is much favored.<sup>47</sup> The next step should naturally be the convocation of intercontinental congresses and the creation of intercontinental federations.

Much the same reasons which in the beginning led to the formation of national trade unions are now being urged in favor of intercontinental unions. High national tariff walls are supposed to prevent the profits of the manufacturer and the wages of the workman in a country from being lowered by the competition of imported goods made by cheap foreign labor. In free-trade England, however, the invasion of the home market by foreign goods is attributed by some to the narrow policy pursued by English trade unionists. Thus, the fact that German steel castings, Swedish ready-made doors, or other foreign products can be bought in England for a smaller price than goods made at nearby mills is ascribed by one writer to the enforcement of two policies by English trade unions. The first of these is the *ca' canny* or *go-easy* policy, by which the stint of work, and hence the daily output of a factory, is arbitrarily limited.<sup>48</sup> The second is the opposition to the introduction of machinery and other labor-saving devices. Assertions regarding the extent and influence of such policies are exceedingly difficult to prove. They suggest, however, that if trade-union demands can influence the manufacturers' control of home or foreign markets, world-wide collective bargaining by the workers will soon be needed. The creation of a great centralized strike fund supported by all organizations of a trade in the world has been suggested as a means of coping

<sup>47</sup> *American Federationist*, June, 1903, pp. 463, 464.

<sup>48</sup> "If two Scotsmen are walking together and one walks too quickly for the other, he says to him, '*Ca' canny, mon, ca' canny*,' which means '*Go easy, man, go easy*'" (E. A. Pratt, *Trade Unionism and British Industry*, p. 22).

with gigantic trusts and powerful anti-union alliances of employers.<sup>49</sup> In case of a serious and wide-reaching strike in one country, money is sent frequently to the strikers by the workers of other lands, and this custom seems to be growing.

The most potent reason for world-wide trade unionism is the international movement of the labor supply. One serious evil from the wage-earners' point of view has been the importation of foreign laborers on contract, particularly to act as strike breakers. As early as 1831 the master printers of New York secured by advertisements in England and Scotland foreign journeymen printers to take the places of their employees who had been ordered on strike by the New York Typographical Society.<sup>50</sup> Again, to illustrate by an instance occurring many years later, in 1882, when the boiler makers and iron ship builders of New York City went on strike, several firms sent to England for men.<sup>51</sup> On this occasion, however, the president of the International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers and Ship Builders and Helpers cabled to the secretary of the boiler makers' union of Great Britain, and as a result not a man could be hired in England. The American workers have protected themselves against such importations by securing the adoption of a Federal statute forbidding the importation of workers into their country on contract. Laborers imported on contract have always formed, however, only a small part of the stream of immigrants pouring into the United States. This invasion of foreigners still continues, and prevents unions otherwise strong from regulating the supply of workers in the trade and thus influencing wages. The American unions have desired protection from the competition of foreign workers similar to the protection accorded to American manufacturers from the competition of foreign goods.

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<sup>49</sup> For example, see the *Shoe Workers' Journal*, September, 1902, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> Historical Sketch in the Constitution of the New York Typographical Association as amended in 1833.

<sup>51</sup> Simonds and McEnnis.

In the absence of legal restriction on immigration, the unions have tried in several ways to protect themselves. One method, undoubtedly a very crude one, has been to discourage further immigration by charging a heavy initiation fee for admission to the union. The imposition of such a fee results practically in exclusion from the union; and if the trade is strongly organized and the members consistently refuse to work with non-union men, the immigrant finds difficulty in securing work at his trade. Such a policy is pursued by the American wire weavers who make the wire cloth used in the manufacture of paper. The trade is small, consisting of only about three or four hundred members, practically all of whom are controlled by the American Wire Weavers' Protective Association. Entrance to the craft is restricted by stringent apprenticeship regulations, yet the union has been handicapped greatly by the immigration of English and Scotch wire weavers who are attracted to this country by the high wages. To remedy this condition, the American wire weavers prohibit European immigrants from joining the union by imposing on them an initiation fee of five hundred dollars, and, by refusing to work in the same factory with non-unionists, prevent them from finding employment. The Lace Curtain Operatives pursue a similar policy. The trade, like that of the wire weavers, is small, and is controlled almost wholly by the union. At the same time, the lace workers are threatened by an influx of foreigners. A uniform initiation fee of twenty dollars is charged by all local branches, and many desire to make it much higher. Recently the officers of the union have been given discretion to increase the amount of the initiation fee during periods when the industry is dull. The European unions of lace workers must be notified each time the amount of the fee is changed; since, however, the industry is fitful, busy and prosperous periods of a few weeks alternating quickly with periods of depression, they cannot be kept informed of all the changes in the amount of the initiation fee.



Unless a union controls most members of the trade, the policy of exclusion is not successful, since the immigrant can find work in the non-union or open shop. Most organizations, therefore, try in every way to bring foreigners into the union, and to facilitate this have sometimes entered into agreements with European associations, particularly those of Great Britain. To minimize the competition of immigrant iron molders, the president of the Iron Molders' Union of North America proposed as early as 1867 an alliance with English and Scotch unions of the trade.<sup>52</sup> Nothing was accomplished until 1872, when an agreement was entered into with the Friendly Society of Iron Founders of England, Ireland and Wales. By the terms of this agreement the Iron Molders' Union of North America agreed to admit, without payment of an initiation fee, journeymen bearing clearance cards from the Friendly Society. On their part, the members of the Friendly Society agreed not to enter into written contracts binding them to work in any foundry of the United States or Canada where the Molders were on strike. The society promised also to inflict punishment, when opportunity should arise, on any member who failed to deposit his card with the American union within one week after his arrival in America.<sup>53</sup> A little later it agreed to admit, without payment of an initiation fee, members of the American union who came to Great Britain. The Cigar Makers' International Union of America entered into a similar agreement with the Cigar Makers' Mutual Association of England about 1880,<sup>54</sup> and is ready at the present day to accept cigar makers belonging to foreign societies without payment of an initiation fee, provided the foreign societies grant to its members the same privilege.<sup>55</sup> The Piano and Organ Workers' Union accepts members in good standing with organizations of the trade in foreign coun-

<sup>52</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1867.

<sup>53</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings of the Iron Molders' Union, 1872; *International Journal [Iron Molders]*, September, 1872.

<sup>54</sup> Report of the President, in Supplement to Cigar Makers' Official Journal, September, 1880.

<sup>55</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, October, 1881, pp. 5, 10.

tries without payment of an initiation fee, provided they join within four weeks after their arrival in America. A similar policy has been followed by the American unions of printers, coal mine workers, and boot and shoe workers.

Replies to letters which the president of the American Federation of Labor sent in 1905 to trade unions of foreign countries for the purpose of urging the mutual recognition of cards between unions of kindred crafts and callings showed that the practice of admitting members of foreign unions without payment of an initiation fee was more common in Europe than in America. The painters, varnishers, plasterers, and whitewashers of Germany, for example, reported that agreements providing for the remission of initiation fees existed between the principal organizations of these trades in Germany, Denmark, Austria-Hungary, Servia, and Switzerland, but that the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America have refused to enter into such an agreement. Similarly, the Amalgamated Operative Lace Makers of Nottingham, England, reported that the organized lace makers of England, France, Scotland, and Spain have reached an agreement whereby each association admits members bearing cards from the others without requiring an initiation fee. The same privilege is extended on reciprocal terms to American lace makers; but the American organization has not accepted it, and imposes a heavy initiation fee on immigrant lace makers.

The investigation of the American Federation of Labor showed that the unions both at home and abroad were favorable on the whole to the mutual recognition of travelling cards. Certain modifications of the scheme were urged. The suggestion was made that the immigrant workman who was admitted to the union of his newly adopted country without paying a fee must have belonged to the union of the trade in his former country for longer than a certain period. Most of the European associations insisted, however, that the required minimum period of membership in the former union be as short as possible, certainly not more

than one year. Unions paying sick, death, and other benefits were also reluctant to allow journeymen from foreign associations not paying such benefits to become eligible to receive them until they had belonged for at least a certain length of time.<sup>56</sup>

An effective alliance between trade unionists of Europe and America is still largely a dream of the future; yet even as correspondence and informal cooperation between local societies led in America to the creation of national and continental associations, so the agreements and exchange of courtesies between American and European unions may possibly lead to world federation. A few intercontinental unions exist, indeed, at the present time, and the formation of others has been attempted in the past. The oldest examples are two British trade unions, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, which have established branch societies in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and other parts of the world where British workers are to be found in numbers. Both unions have founded branches in most of the larger cities of North America, and have united these branches into American-Canadian districts. These districts have councils and secretaries of their own, and enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy even on such important questions as strikes. Both are affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.

These British associations have attained such wide territorial jurisdiction because of the desire of their members on emigrating to other countries to remain eligible to the sick, death, and other benefits of the home society. The benefits paid by American unions, as compared with those of English unions in these trades, are held to be completely inadequate. Moreover, in order to be entitled to them, one must have belonged to the American union for a certain length of time. The large benefits paid by these English organizations have led even native Americans to join them.

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<sup>56</sup> Proceedings of the Twenty-sixth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor, 1906.

The attempt of the British unions to maintain branches in America has caused them to clash with certain American organizations. A bitter jurisdictional dispute has existed for years between the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers, which combines several trades that in America are organized into separate associations, has had to wage a controversy simultaneously with several American unions, namely, the International Association of Machinists, the Patternmakers' League of North America, and the Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Helpers.

The unions native to American soil have resented greatly this encroachment on their territory by alien associations. Early in the history of this foreign invasion their attitude was well expressed by a certain labor publication as follows: "It is certainly not claiming too much to assert that the men acquainted with our institutions, the peculiarities and wants of our own people are better able to direct the labor movement and control the various labor organizations than Englishmen, Scotchmen, or Irishmen, residing in Great Britain or continental Europe. American institutions are bound to predominate on the Western Continent, and we think American workmen, both native and foreign born, are just as qualified to direct their own affairs and settle their own grievances as men who reside three or four thousand miles from the field of operation. We welcome the good men and true from all countries, and ask their aid and advice, but we claim and have a right to expect that those who cast their lot with us, and gain a livelihood in our midst, should become *home* instead of *foreign* missionaries. Let us reverse the case, and suppose the president of the Machinists and Blacksmiths' Union of North America should appoint deputies for the several counties of Great Britain, and organize unions which acknowledge fealty alone to the Western International. What a hue and cry of unwarrantable impertinence would be raised from one end of the island to the other, and justly too. Now, what is

sauce for the goose is, sauce for the gander. If it would be in bad taste, to establish American Unions in Great Britain, is it not equally so to establish British Unions in the United States? Properly guarded, both organizations would become helpmates to each other instead of being as at present stumbling blocks in each other's way."<sup>57</sup>

Within recent years various schemes have been outlined for the partial amalgamation of the American districts of the British societies with the unions in the United States. In 1902 the executive council of the American Federation of Labor decided that while the unions of blacksmiths, patternmakers, and machinists in the United States should be accorded full jurisdiction in all trade matters such as regulation of wages and hours, the members of the American-Canadian district of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers should pay dues to the British association and hence be entitled to receive its sick, death, and other benefits. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers refused, however, to accept this decision.<sup>58</sup> Again, in 1905, an umpire selected by the American District of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of North America proposed the creation of joint councils in all cities and towns where the United Brotherhood and the Amalgamated Society have branches. These joint councils were to have power to regulate wages and hours, to maintain business agents, and to pay strike benefits. The American Carpenters believe that the complete absorption of the British branches of the trade by their association is the only satisfactory solution, and they refuse to compromise.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Quoted from the *Workman's Advocate*, in the *Machinists and Blacksmiths' Journal*, January, 1872, p. 477.

<sup>58</sup> Report of the Conference between the Sectional Unions and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Cleveland (n. d.).

<sup>59</sup> For a copy of proposed "temporary trade or working agreement," see *The Carpenter*, December, 1903, p. 5. For later modification of temporary agreement, see *Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Convention of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners*, 1904, p. 220. The discussion and vote on the umpire's plan of amalgamation is contained in the *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Biennial Convention of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners*, 1906, pp. 35-37.

Attempts have been made in the past by several American associations to confederate with European unions, though apparently with little success. When the call for the first national convention of window glass workers was issued in 1874, the establishment of the proposed national union was considered to be a preliminary step to the creation of a wider confederation embracing similar branches of skilled labor in Europe.<sup>60</sup> In 1884, at the high tide in the Knights of Labor movement, a former official of the Window Glass Workers was sent to Europe by the Window Glass Workers' National Assembly 300, Knights of Labor, to establish branches of the Knights of Labor among the glass workers of Europe. The proposed federation was declared at the time to be "not so difficult an undertaking as would at first seem. The foundation of a universal union had," it was said, "been laid in England, France and Belgium. The work of solidifying all into one organization is the work of the future. When production, stock, consumption, the number of men idle or employed, and the number of apprentices learning the trade, is known all over the world, and sent to a common headquarters, then the perfect union shall have been attained."<sup>61</sup> Apparently, however, the attempt of the Window Glass Workers failed.

The International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers, Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers was more successful in maintaining for a time an alliance with the British union of the trade. Intimate relations began in 1882 with the negotiations between the officers of the two associations to prevent the importation of English boiler makers into New York City to take the place of the men on strike. In 1885 the English society sent representatives to the convention of the American union, and the two associations became united. In 1887 the Boiler Makers and Iron Shipbuilders claimed to be the only association federated with their English fellow-craftsmen. All traces of the existence of such an alliance are lost, however, after a few years. In 1893 the United

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<sup>60</sup> National Labor Tribune, May 23, 1874, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., October 11, 1884, p. 4.

Brewery Workmen of America began negotiations with the national union of German brewery workmen looking to the establishment of an intercontinental union. From these negotiations apparently nothing resulted.<sup>62</sup> Since 1894, fraternal delegates from the British Trade Union Congress have been present at conventions of the American Federation of Labor, and delegates are sent from the American Federation to the British Trade Union Congress.<sup>63</sup>

A wide-reaching though very loose alliance has been maintained by the coal miners' unions of the various countries. An International Congress at which the miners' associations of England, Scotland, Wales, Belgium, France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary have been represented has been held annually by the miners of Europe since about 1890. In 1904 the United Mine Workers of America were invited to send delegates to the congress, and with their admission over two million miners were said to be represented by delegates who came from countries producing nineteen twentieths of all the coal mined in the world.<sup>64</sup> The results of these congresses have been indirect. A wide variety of subjects has been discussed, including such questions as the prohibition of the employment of women in the mining industry, legal prohibition of the employment of children under fourteen years, inspection of mines, nationalization of mines, old-age pensions, the eight-hour day, and minimum and maximum wage scales. The congress has no power to compel the organizations represented to obey its mandates, but resolutions adopted by unanimous vote are considered morally binding and exert strong influence, to say the least, over the miners' unions in each country. The maintenance by the miners of the world of a central office in charge of a permanent secretary has been suggested but so far has not been adopted.

One effect of the congress has been to stimulate the workers in backward countries to raise the conditions of labor

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<sup>62</sup> Brauer-Zeitung, January 21, 1893.

<sup>63</sup> American Federationist, October, 1903, pp. 1052-1053, 1128.

<sup>64</sup> Report of the President, in Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, 1904.

toward the standard which prevails in more progressive countries. "The greatest possible difference exists, for example, between the wages of miners in various parts of Europe. In Great Britain the wages have been relatively high, until the last year or two, comparing not unfavorably with the wages of American miners. In France and Belgium, however, wages are much lower, and in certain parts of Germany, notably in the eastern or Silesian district, and throughout Austria, the rate of remuneration is so low that the workingman cannot live in decency, and in many cases cannot maintain himself in physical vigor."<sup>85</sup> The delegates to the congress from the less progressive countries have carried back home the report of better conditions in other lands, and in consequence have stimulated their compatriots to develop their unions and to bring wages up to a higher level. The congress has also urged the unions of the less advanced nations to agitate for the adoption of progressive labor legislation by the state. Partly as a result of its efforts, the work of women inside the mines has been prohibited by practically all the countries represented. Many women in Europe pick slate and do other rough work outside the mines, but almost none are employed inside.

Perhaps the most important achievement of the congress, certainly the one of greatest interest to the American delegates, was the adoption in 1906 of the uniform transfer card recognized by the organized miners of the world.<sup>86</sup> The United Mine Workers and other American unions which do not collect an initiation fee from members of European unions had great difficulty in determining whether the transfer cards presented by foreign miners were genuine or not. The cards differed greatly in form, and were printed in many languages, frequently unintelligible to local union secretaries. Sometimes non-union miners sought admittance to the local unions of the United Mine Workers of America upon the presentation of cards issued by other than miners' unions in their own countries. Sometimes

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<sup>85</sup> United Mine Workers' Journal, September, 1904; July, 1906.

<sup>86</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1907.



passports or books issued by fraternal societies were offered. Much time and trouble was consumed in verifying cards by correspondence with the European organizations. Sometimes members of bona fide miners' unions in Europe were refused admittance because the American association feared that they were impostors. Occasionally, when the officers of the central organization found the card to be authentic and instructed the local union to accept it, the latter, still suspicious, refused to do so, and complied only when threatened with revocation of its charter. The result was friction within the organization. The foreign miner whose card was not recognized or was recognized only after a long delay thought that he had been discriminated against as a foreigner, bore a grudge against the American organization, and became perhaps strongly anti-union in feeling.<sup>67</sup> The inscription on the transfer card adopted by the Miners' Congress is printed in a number of languages, and the difficulty of verification, which has troubled so greatly the American unions of miners, has thus been obviated.

Undoubtedly the world-wide trade union, if it is ever formed, must be a very loose confederation at first, with advisory rather than mandatory powers. But the early national and continental unions in the United States were likewise loose confederations at first, and as the national and the continental unions have developed their functions and in many cases have become centralized, so also, with the growing economic interdependence of all parts of the world, highly centralized world federations may some day be evolved.

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<sup>67</sup> Report of the President, in Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual Convention, 1906.

## PART II

### THE CENTRALIZATION OF CONTROL

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#### CHAPTER V

##### THE DECLINE OF THE SHOP MEETING AND OF THE DISTRICT UNION\*

A crucial problem in the government of the American trade union has been the proper division of powers between the international, district, local, and shop organizations. The movement has been steadily toward the centralization of authority in the larger federal bodies. This centralization has been accomplished, however, only after a long and a bitter struggle.

First, in point of time, was the struggle for supremacy between the shop organization and the local union. The shop meeting surrendered its control over collective bargaining with extreme reluctance. For many years in some trades the workers in each establishment bargained with their employer concerning their own wages, hours, and other conditions of labor. In consequence of this decentralized policy, competing factories in the same community often had widely different wage scales and hours of work. As late as the period immediately following the Civil War such variations existed even in unions which, like the Iron Molders, now conduct collective bargaining on a national basis.<sup>1</sup> The desirability of uniform conditions of employment has become so obvious, however, that almost everywhere control over such matters has been absorbed by the

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\*International Journal [Iron Molders], May, 1866, p. 62.

local or federal unions of the trade. There are a few exceptions.<sup>1</sup> The Ladies' Garment Workers, for example, who are paid by the piece, permit each shop committee to fix the rate of wages with its employer. This practice is necessary because the piece rate varies between factories and from day to day in each factory, according to the constantly changing styles of ladies' garments. The Hatters pursue a similar decentralized policy. Methods of production are said to vary widely in different hat factories. At the desire of the manufacturers, wages are determined by agreement between the employer and employees in each factory.<sup>2</sup> In the great majority of trades, however, the local union endeavors to secure the same conditions from all employers in the community.<sup>3</sup>

The shop has also surrendered very reluctantly the right to declare a strike, which it exercised in some trades before local unions existed. Even when the terms of the labor contract are admittedly fixed by the local unions, the members of the shop have not infrequently claimed the right to strike when these terms are violated by an employer. But shop strikes have often been hasty and ill-advised. They have been declared with no proper consideration of the prospects of success, no study of the conditions of the industry, of the number of men out of employment, or of the general state of the labor market. It has been sufficient that a grievance existed. For this reason shop strikes have usually failed. On the other hand, when the proposal to strike is submitted to the local union, a large part of those who make the decision are not directly involved in the dispute, and so are not blinded by a sense of personal injury.

<sup>1</sup> Constitution and By-Laws, 1907, art. v. Minimum rates, both district and national, confine the variations between factories to a narrow range in any particular locality.

<sup>2</sup> Though the Glass Bottle Blowers and the Potters have national scales of wages, they permit a shop committee to fix the rate per piece for any new article not covered by existing agreements. The piece rate for the new article must be submitted for approval to the local union. The members of a shop are sometimes allowed to arrange with their employers details concerning methods of work and other minor matters not affecting cost of production.

Moreover, when benefits are paid to men on strike by local and national unions, naturally those who are taxed demand the right to determine how the money shall be expended. Usually, therefore, shop strikes are forbidden.

There are a few unions, notably the building trades unions, which permit the members working on a particular building to strike when the employer violates any term of his agreement with the union. The men on the building must be vested with such power, declare union officials in the building trades, because the shifting character of the work makes prompt action necessary. By the time the consent of the local union can be obtained the building, they say, will be finished, and the men scattered in various parts of the city. At the same time, since only a small fraction of the trade is employed on a single building, the financial burden of paying strike benefits is light, and the failure of the strike is not a fatal blow to the union. Nevertheless, with the rise of large contractors and with the formation of employers' associations to fight or bargain with the union, each strike in the building trades is tending to involve an ever increasing number of men, working on not one but many buildings. There is a tendency also for an insignificant struggle begun on one building to spread until the workers on many buildings in the community are involved. For these reasons the building trades unions are beginning to make some efforts to control shop strikes.

Though distinctly forbidden, unauthorized shop strikes have continued to occur. As late as the convention of 1880, the president of the Cigar Makers' International Union reported their frequent occurrence to the general convention, and declared that the local unions were impotent to prevent them. "After the shop struck," he said, "the union calls a special meeting for the purpose of sustaining its action. There is no choice under these circumstances, the men having once gone out, because, in fact, the union fears to act otherwise."<sup>4</sup> In conformity with suggestions of the

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<sup>4</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, October, 1880, p. 2.

president at this convention, Local Union No. 144 of Cigar Makers in New York City passed a stringent rule designed to prevent the unauthorized shop strike.<sup>5</sup> It provided that when an "organized shop" went on strike without the sanction of the local union, the president of the union should request the men involved to return to work. If they refused, he should advertise for non-union men and fill their places. To insure the performance of this disagreeable task by the president, the law further provided for his removal from office should he fail to inflict such punishment. As might have been predicted, after the passage of this rule the New York local unions had much less difficulty with rebellious shops. Similar rules have been adopted by local unions in this and other trades, but even at the present day the members of a shop occasionally declare unauthorized strikes.

In many organizations the members of a shop may endeavor through a committee to adjust disputes with employers by peaceful means. In other unions, however, they may not even perform this function. All alleged violations of agreements and other grievances must be submitted immediately to special or standing boards of conciliation created by the local unions, which take up the matter with the employer.

The shop is now primarily a convenient administrative unit for the transaction of a limited number of executive functions especially delegated to it by the local union. Certain officials, elected sometimes by the shop, sometimes by the local union, collect dues, affix the label to union-made goods, and perform other carefully specified duties.

The division of function between district and national unions has not been a difficult problem, since most state and district unions have been created by the national organizations to exercise certain very limited, specially delegated powers. Among the coal mine workers, however, state and district unions existed for many years prior to the formation

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<sup>5</sup> By-Laws of Local Union No. 144 of New York City, adopted 1883, art. x, sec. 11, in *Cigar Makers' Official Journal*, August, 1883.

of national unions, and after the permanent establishment of a national union in the year 1885 these bodies refused stubbornly to be stripped of any of their powers. From 1885 to 1898 the national union of coal mine workers possessed no real function and hung together as by a thread. A joint conference board on which were represented the miners and operators of Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia was indeed created in 1885 to equalize wages and other conditions of employment in these five States, but it was discontinued in 1887. The officers of the national association attempted to equalize wages by organizing unions and urging the miners to strike for higher wages in districts where the scale was exceptionally low. Usually the national officers were also present at the state or district conference between employers and employees, and exercised a general oversight over such agreements, but the influence which they exerted was very slight. In 1890 a strike fund was created. The effort to maintain it was abandoned after a year or two, and strikes were again supported by the several state associations.

The national organization was held in such little esteem by the miners in the Pittsburg district that in 1891 they debated hotly the advisability of withdrawing from it. The vote on the question at the district convention resulted in a tie, and was finally referred to the local lodges. Secession was in fact only narrowly prevented. During the next two or more years the dissolution of the central union was frequently urged by writers in the official journal. "The national association," they declared, "is useless. Better conditions, whenever secured, have resulted from the activity, not of the national, but of the state and district unions." With little excuse for its existence, the confederation did manage to hold together even through the troublous times following the panic of 1893.

Since 1898 the powers of the national union have grown considerably. The interstate conferences were renewed in that year, and with greater regulation of the terms of the labor contract there has developed greater control over the

declaration and conduct of strikes. The interstate agreement applies, however, only to the States of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and to western Pennsylvania. To be sure, the scale fixed for miners in these States has been used as a basis for wages paid in outlying coal fields;<sup>6</sup> moreover, since 1904 an interstate agreement has been maintained by the miners and operators of Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Indian Territory, and Texas,<sup>7</sup> but there is no prospect that the wish of leaders among the miners for a national joint conference of coal operators and their employees will be fulfilled in the near future. The United Mine Workers of America is, therefore, still a loose confederation. As yet, much of the collective bargaining is conducted by the district unions, and many of them maintain strike funds of equal or larger amount than that of the national association.

The importance of the district union among the Miners is, however, exceptional. In other trades it exercises its powers, which are chiefly administrative or judicial, at the discretion of the national union. Its acts and decisions are usually reviewable and reversible by the larger federation. In only one out of five international unions which vest the district organization with judicial power to consider appeals by members from decisions of the local societies is the verdict of the district association final.<sup>8</sup> In only two out of the forty-nine unions which vest the district unions with some control over the declaration and conduct of strikes may the district organization call a strike supported from the national treasury without the sanction of the national association.<sup>9</sup> If the district union opposes the declaration of a strike desired by a local society, its action is usually final, though

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<sup>6</sup> Proceedings of Annual Joint Conference of Coal Miners and Operators of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania, 1898-1906.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the United Mine Workers of America, 1904, p. 27.

<sup>8</sup> The Teamsters.

<sup>9</sup> The Amalgamated Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of America and the International Tin Plate Workers' Protective Association of America. One of the four members of the district board, which in these two unions has authority to declare strikes, is, however, a national official, namely, a national vice-president, who by reason of that office serves as executive head of the district.

the Boot and Shoe Workers and a few other unions provide that the local society whose application has been refused may appeal to the international executive board.

The creation of district unions, while not reducing the power of the national associations, does greatly limit the powers of the local societies. The district organizations have stripped the local unions of nearly all control over the conditions of employment in those trades where national collective bargaining is impracticable. In forty-nine out of eighty-six unions whose rules require the formation of district unions the local union may not even ask the national union to give financial support to its strike without securing the consent of the joint executive board or of a joint mass-meeting of all local unions in the district. Moreover, the district unions, which are frequently charged with the enforcement of national rules, have made the control over local unions by the national federations much more effective.

The growth in the power of the district unions has not been accepted by the local societies without a protest. At times, they have refused to send representatives to the joint council of the district or have refused to obey its enactments. When such rebellion occurs, the national union is usually appealed to, and it enforces obedience to the mandates of its subordinate federation by threat of fine or expulsion.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE ABSORPTION OF POWER BY THE NATIONAL UNION

The early national unions were decentralized. Some of them had not even the unity of confederations, but were rather conferences of independent bodies. So slight, indeed, was the tie that the national unions were conceived to be composed not of allied local societies, but of the officers and delegates to the representative assembly. This conception is reflected in the following section from the first constitution of the Printers:<sup>1</sup> "The members of the National Union shall be composed of its elective officers and the representatives from subordinate unions acting under legal unreclaimed warrants granted by the National Union." An almost identical clause is found in the first national constitutions of the Iron Molders<sup>2</sup> and of the Bricklayers,<sup>3</sup> and the same idea is expressed in the preamble to the rules of the early Machinists' and Blacksmiths' Union.<sup>4</sup> When these national unions became more firmly established and began to exercise important functions, this conception was rapidly lost.

The national and international unions exercise specially delegated powers. All powers not so specially delegated are reserved to the local unions. In all unions the number of functions exercised by the central federation has increased with greater or less rapidity, but some associations are still greatly decentralized. Others have absorbed nearly all powers until the subordinate unions exist primarily to administer the functions of the national union according to detailed rules fixed by that body.

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution, 1851.

<sup>2</sup> Constitution, 1859, in Proceedings, 1859.

<sup>3</sup> Constitution, 1867.

<sup>4</sup> Machinists and Blacksmiths' Journal, April, 1872, p. 593.

The national unions have first encroached on the powers of the local societies by adopting rules governing the admission of members. Even before national unions existed, journeymen bearing "travelling cards" indicating membership in some local society of the trade were admitted by other societies without payment of an initiation fee. All national unions have continued this policy, and their earliest rules were those regulating the issuance, presentation, and acceptance of travelling cards. The regulations governing the card system were declared by the president of the International Typographical Union in 1867 to be the only legislation which "had the tendency to bind together union printers with the bonds of fraternal communion and friendly alliance." In fact, from 1852 to 1884 such regulation was practically the sole function of the federal organization of the Printers.<sup>5</sup>

The willingness to accept without question a workman bearing a card from another local union logically involves the acceptance of uniform regulations regarding qualifications for membership. When a difference of opinion exists between the local unions concerning the proper qualifications for membership, regulation by the international association becomes necessary. When, for example, the molding machine was introduced into cigar factories, some local unions admitted to membership the workers on these machines. Others refused to do so. Therefore, regulation by the national union became essential, and about 1876, after several years of bitter controversy, a rule was introduced to the effect that no local union should reject an applicant to membership on account of the condition of working. The rules governing qualifications for membership in the Cigar Makers' Union were declared in 1876, twelve years after the founding of the federal society, to be "the only law in the international constitution which warrants equity of principles within the different unions."<sup>6</sup>

The maintenance of a travelling card has also rendered

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<sup>5</sup> G. E. Barnett, *The Printers*, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> *Cigar Makers' Official Journal*, March, 1876.

expedient the national regulation of the amount of the initiation fee required by the local unions. Otherwise, a journeyman wishing to join a society having a higher fee than others may evade paying the difference by going to a nearby society with a lower entrance fee, drawing a travelling card, and then becoming a member of the union with the high fee, simply by depositing his card.

Rules governing the admission of members have been adopted by all national unions, and in some of them these rules constitute the sole or chief legislation limiting the power of the local unions. Regulations concerning the use of the travelling card are to be found in the constitutions of all national organizations, and the qualifications for membership are carefully defined whenever there is dispute as to the kind of workmen that shall be admitted. The local societies have objected with much earnestness, however, to the establishment of a uniform initiation fee. The strong local union which wishes to deter non-unionists from joining the society objects to a uniform fee of lower amount than the one which it charges. The weak local union which wishes to secure new members objects seriously to the establishment of a higher fee. About three fourths of the one hundred and thirty national and international associations studied have, indeed, attempted to regulate the amount of the initiation fee, but only thirty-six, or about twenty-eight per cent, have adopted a uniform fee for all branches. Forty-nine have established a minimum, ranging from one dollar to fifty dollars. Ten have set a maximum and a minimum limit. Though local societies have objected strenuously to any interference with their internal affairs, their government and their finances have been reorganized frequently by the national unions. Federal organizations have thus interfered in order to secure the good administration not only of national activities but, at a later stage, of purely local activities as well.

The cooperation of the local unions is required to administer most national functions. Since the general officers

at headquarters cannot very conveniently act at the trial of a member living in some community many miles away, members must be tried for violation of national rules by local tribunals. The early national unions needed the cooperation of local societies to maintain their first activity, namely, the travelling card, which admitted members of one constituent society to any other without payment of an initiation fee. They needed such cooperation even more when they began to pay national sick, out-of-work, strike, and other benefits. To be sure, the death benefit, consisting of a single lump payment, is awarded usually by some national officer who bases his decision on the physician's certificate, affidavits as to name, age, date of birth, date of admission to union, and other data submitted by the subordinate societies. But sick and out-of-work benefits and the system of advancing loans to members who wish to travel in search of work must be administered by the local unions. The reason is that the international officers cannot make the many small, consecutive payments required for the maintenance of these activities without grave inconvenience, nor can they detect fraud on the part of the beneficiaries. Even local officials who are personally acquainted with the applicants, who have complete opportunity for investigation and every desire to administer honestly and efficiently, can detect them only with great difficulty.

Again, to insure the prompt payment of sick or out-of-work benefits by the local officers, the national union desires to keep funds constantly on deposit in the treasury of the constituent societies. Most federal organizations prefer to endure the delay rather than entrust funds to the local unions; but the Elastic Goring Weavers' Amalgamated Association, which pays sick and out-of-work benefits, the Cigar Makers' International Union, which makes loans to travelling members and pays sick and out-of-work benefits, and the Piano, Organ and Musical Instrument Workers' International Union, which, though a close imitator of the cigar makers' organization, pays only sick benefits, have felt

compelled to entrust the local societies with all national funds. Moreover, the Iron Molders' Union, the only remaining association paying an unemployment benefit, entrusts the local unions with all funds set apart for the payment of such out-of-work benefits.

The local union's method of conducting national activities or of administering justice must be carefully regulated, otherwise it is apt to be lax and inefficient. The judicial decisions of the subordinate societies are often arbitrary and unfair. Accused members are sometimes not given full opportunity for defense, and the penalties inflicted are often disproportionate to the misdemeanor. Certain violations of the rules, such as the failure to pay dues or the presentation of fraudulent claims, are condoned. Other violations, such as the acceptance of employment in "scab" or non-union shops, are summarily punished by expulsion or by fines so heavy that the delinquent is not able to pay them. The efforts of early national unions such as the Iron Molders<sup>7</sup> or the Cigar Makers<sup>8</sup> to loan money to travelling members or to pay sick or out-of-work benefits failed because they left the administration largely to the discretion of the local unions. Subsequent attempts of the federal associations of iron molders and cigar makers were successful because they had gained much greater control over the subordinate societies, and could prescribe in minute detail who should administer and how they should administer the international activities. When necessary, these associations have created local officers to perform such services, and have also provided for travelling international officials who visit the subordinate societies and enforce efficient administration. Indeed, the successful maintenance of sick and out-of-work benefits and of the system of loans to travelling members requires such close supervision over local administration that

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<sup>7</sup> Early in the history of the Iron Molders' Union a system of loans to travelling members was abolished after a short trial (Constitution, in Proceedings, 1860; Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1866).

<sup>8</sup> For a similar attempt by the Cigar Makers, see Cigar Makers' Official Journal, August, 1887.

only a few strongly centralized federal associations attempt to maintain these activities.

The next stage—regulation to promote the efficient administration of purely local functions—followed naturally. Very early in the history of national unions, members were permitted to appeal from decisions of the subordinate unions in cases involving not only national but also local rules. One hundred and four of the one hundred and thirty national unions pursue this policy at the present time. Sixty-nine of the one hundred and thirty unions prescribe the method of procedure at trials of members in the local unions, and this procedure must be followed in cases involving local as well as national rules. One small group of four associations prevents excessive fines by fixing the maximum fine which the local unions can impose,<sup>9</sup> and six others require the ratification of all fines over a certain amount by the central authorities.<sup>10</sup>

About sixty of the one hundred and thirty organizations studied regulate local receipts and expenditures. Unionists are reluctant to pay high dues, and in order to force the subordinate societies to collect sufficient revenue to perform their functions adequately, all of the above sixty organizations regulate the amount of dues. Forty-one, or about two thirds, simply fix the minimum amount of the dues.<sup>11</sup> The remaining nineteen international associations fix uniform dues, and nine of these also fix uniform initiation fees. Some of these nineteen international unions attempt to determine also how the local unions shall spend the money which they collect. The Cigar Makers and the Piano, Organ and Musical Instrument Workers thus limit local expenditures to certain carefully enumerated administrative purposes,—postage and supplies, rent of meeting-room, offi-

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<sup>9</sup> Brewery Workers, \$25, Granite Cutters, \$50, Marine Engineers, \$25, Stationary Engineers, \$2.

<sup>10</sup> Cigar Makers, \$10, Piano, Organ and Musical Instrument Workers, \$50, Plumbers, Gas Fitters, Steam Fitters, and Steam Fitters' Helpers, \$25, Shingle Weavers, \$10, Steam, Hot Water and Power Pipe Fitters and Helpers, \$25, Steel Plate Transferrers, \$25.

<sup>11</sup> One association fixes the maximum amount.

cers' salaries, and so on. The Boot and Shoe Workers limit them to what is rather vaguely termed "running expenses." Seven associations regulate the purposes for which the local unions may levy assessments. Another, composed of steam-shovel and dredgemen, requires that all local assessments must be approved by the international executive board. Two others, the international unions of cigar makers and of piano and organ workers, forbid the subordinate unions to levy assessments for conflicts with employers not sanctioned by the federal associations. This rule is a most effective measure in centralizing control over strikes.

Forty-nine of the one hundred and thirty international unions provide a form of by-laws for subordinate societies, and a number of others enumerate the list of officers or attempt some other limited form of governmental regulation. These by-laws are, however, not always mandatory, but are rather for the guidance of the local unions, particularly the new ones, whose members usually have very crude ideas concerning proper methods of government. Very commonly, indeed, they are closely copied by the subordinate societies, though sometimes with the consent of the central authorities a local union adopts a wholly different set of rules.

A bitter and protracted struggle between the national and local unions has occurred over the control of strikes. In all trades the local union has slowly but surely lost ground, though even today in only a few organizations is the strike policy dictated absolutely by the federal association.

The need of stricter control over local strikes was demonstrated very early in the history of national trade unionism. At meetings of local unions workmen have not so often rushed into a struggle without taking thought as they have done at shop meetings. They have stopped to discuss the matter. Nevertheless, as in the case of the shop meeting, the appeal of the cause rather than the prospect of success has been their chief consideration. The meetings called to decide whether or not to declare a strike are often influenced by emotionalism, enthusiasm, and excitement.

Fiery orators declaim about the wrongs of labor, and declare that the threatened reduction in wages must be resisted since the union can never retreat, or that the principle of the closed shop is the backbone of trade unionism and must be upheld at any sacrifice. Questions of expediency, such as the amount of money in the treasury, the prosperity of the industry, or the number unemployed, have been too frequently overlooked.

When the international unions exercised little or no control over strikes, the local unions almost invariably entered blindly into utterly hopeless conflicts against reductions in wages during industrial depressions. The experience of the Mine Workers during the depression following the panic of 1873 affords an illustration. The National Miners' Association, established in 1873, maintained a strike fund but showed little discrimination in awarding strike benefits. The local union nearly always rushed into a strike, and then dispatched its leaders to the headquarters of the federation for financial aid. Declaring that they were fighting the battles of the miners of the United States, they would pray the national union to save them from the grasping and tyrannical companies. If there remained any money in the national treasury, such a request was usually granted.<sup>12</sup> The strikes of the miners at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and in the Hocking Valley during 1874, those in the anthracite coal regions of the Shenango Valley of Pennsylvania, in the Mahoning Valley and the Tuscarawas Valley of Ohio, and in the mining district of Brazil, Indiana, in 1875 were all fought with vigor. But they failed. With hundreds of miners in the same and adjoining fields out of work and eager to fill the places of the strikers, such struggles had to fail.<sup>13</sup> Within eighteen months the national treasury had been exhausted, and so completely had the resources of the local unions been drained that further requests for assessments and voluntary contributions elicited no response. Coal miners in all parts

<sup>12</sup> National Labor Tribune, November 7, 1874; July 10, 1880, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Iron Molders' Journal, February 10, 1878.



of the country were forced to sever their connection with the union, and the national organization, which had been established so auspiciously a few years before, went completely to pieces.

Similar conditions existed in the Cigar Makers' International Union at this time. By a rule enacted prior to the panic of 1873 the international executive board had no authority to refuse financial aid to any local union that wanted to resist either a reduction in wages or the imposition of conditions contrary to the rules of the association. Only in case the local union wished to strike for an increase of wages did the board have authority to withhold funds. When the industrial depression came, the executive board, helplessly tied by these restrictions, had no power to prevent the members from plunging recklessly into strikes, though they knew such a course to be suicidal.<sup>14</sup> The Cigar Makers' International Union was not destroyed, but it lost sixty-seven local unions and nearly three thousand members in three years. It emerged from the depression weak, scarcely able to hold together, with only seventeen local unions and a membership of about one thousand. The one organization with a somewhat centralized control of strikes—the Iron Molders' Union—alone emerged, not, indeed, wholly scathless, yet in fairly prosperous condition and able to resume a belligerent policy immediately with the beginning of better times. The Iron Molders had already learned their lesson during the panic following the beginning of the Civil War.

Even if the local unions do consider very carefully the prospect of success, they are not in a position to determine how far the state of the industry warrants the declaration of a strike, since conditions of which they are ignorant in distant parts of their own country or in other countries may render their strike a total failure. For example, the large strikes of the Stone Masons and the Carpenters and Joiners in England during 1877 failed because of neglect to take into consideration conditions in other parts of the world.

<sup>14</sup> Report of the President, 1875. See also Cigar Makers' Official Journal, November 10, 1880, p. 2.

The union of each trade embraced nearly the whole of the craft, and had accumulated a very large strike fund; but both strikes failed because the depression on the Continent and in America had thrown such a large number of men out of employment that the English contractors were able to import workmen from foreign countries to take the place of the strikers.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the national officers usually receive monthly reports concerning the state of the trade from all parts of the United States and even from other countries. With this broader outlook, they are able to formulate an effective strike policy. In the cigar industry, for example, the union has been less successful in its struggles with employers during the dull season of the trade from November 1 to April 1. Since 1882, with stricter control over such conflicts by the international union, all strikes for an increase in wages have been refused financial support during these months of the year.

The degree of control over strikes exercised by the national organizations varies greatly. One group of some seventeen national unions, most of them weak and newly organized, exercises no control whatever.<sup>16</sup> They offer no financial aid to workers on strike, and do not interfere with the freedom of action of the local unions. One hundred and thirteen unions make some attempt to regulate strikes, but eighty-one of these maintain control only over strikes supported by the funds of the national union. These organizations maintain the right to determine when strikes shall be supported. They require that local societies to whom such aid is granted must conform to certain regulations designed

<sup>15</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings of the Cigar Makers, 1885.

<sup>16</sup> These are the following unions: Barbers, Blast Furnace Workers and Smelters, Commercial Telegraphers, Composition Roofers, Damp and Waterproof Workers, Electrical Workers, Hod Carriers and Building Laborers, Letter Carriers, Marine Engineers, Print Cutters, Railway Clerks, Shipwrights, Joiners, Caulkers, Boat Builders and Ship Cabinet Makers, Slate and Tile Roofers, Stationary Engineers, Steel Plate Transferrers, Wall Paper Machine Printers and Color Mixers, Window Glass Cutters and Flatteners, and Window Glass Workers.

to protect the conservative majority from being overruled by the radical minority on the question of declaring strikes, designed also to lead, if possible, to the peaceful adjustment of disputes with employers, and otherwise to prevent unnecessary or inexpedient strikes. In all of these eighty-one organizations the local unions may strike when and how they please, provided all the expenses of the struggle are paid from the local treasury.

When the national union exercises control only over strikes supported from the central treasury, the effectiveness of this control depends on the strength of the local union's desire for financial aid. The strength of the local union's desire is determined in turn by the adequacy of the aid given by the international association and by the ability of the local union to conduct its conflicts with employers without such assistance.

During the early years of many of the older associations their contributions for the support of strikes were wholly inadequate. For example, the federal associations of cigar makers and iron molders at first merely solicited voluntary donations from the constituent societies. Later, financial assistance was promised for all strikes sanctioned by the national authorities.<sup>17</sup> No benefits of definite amount were guaranteed, however, nor was any reserve fund created for their payment. Special assessments were levied whenever money was needed, but the amount of these assessments was small. Moreover, the local unions, bound by very slender ties to the central organization, were very dilatory in making payments, and sometimes neglected to do so altogether. The sum collected was, therefore, frequently quite insufficient for the maintenance of a strike, and was often not available until several weeks after it had been declared. Later on the majority of the associations fixed the strike benefits at a definite amount, but adequate reserve funds from which to pay them were created tardily.

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<sup>17</sup> Constitution of the Iron Molders' Union, 1863, in Proceedings, 1863; MS. Report of President, in Proceedings of the Cigar Makers' International Union, 1866.

The first important union to adopt this policy was the Granite Cutters, who, affected indirectly by the influence of the English unions, not only offered strike benefits of definite amount at their first national convention in 1877, but also made adequate provision for the accumulation of a fund from which to pay them.<sup>18</sup> The Iron Molders' Union, founded eighteen years earlier, did not establish an emergency strike fund for the payment of strike benefits until 1882, and not until 1890 did it abolish the system of special assessments, and set aside a fixed proportion of the monthly dues for the maintenance of a permanent strike fund.<sup>19</sup> The Cigar Makers' International Union, established in 1864, did not give adequate support to strikes until after the reorganization of its finances according to the English system in 1880.<sup>20</sup> In these early international unions, therefore, the local unions relied for some years on the federal association merely for supplementary aid in their conflicts against employers. Frequently they embarked on strikes without consulting the international officials, and appealed to them for assistance when the exhaustion of their own funds seemed imminent. Under such conditions very limited control could be exercised by the federal association over the declaration and conduct of strikes.

At the present day, many international associations make very inadequate provision for the support of strikes, and hence exercise very limited control over them. Three unions solicit merely voluntary contributions from the local unions.<sup>21</sup> The table on the next page shows the degree of adequacy of the strike benefits guaranteed by one hundred and ten organizations.

Only sixty unions give strike benefits of definite amount, and but thirty-four of these maintain a reserve fund from which to pay them. Moreover, while the reserve fund is large in a few associations, amounting sometimes to one

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<sup>18</sup> Constitution, 1877.

<sup>19</sup> Constitution, 1882; Constitution, 1890.

<sup>20</sup> Constitution, 1880.

<sup>21</sup> These are the following unions: Cutting Die and Cutter Makers, Rubber Workers, and Wire Weavers.

Character of Strike Benefit	Number of Organizations	Number Maintaining Reserve Fund for Strikes
Weekly strike benefit of definite amount guaranteed.....	60	34
No weekly strike benefit of definite amount guaranteed.....	44	9
Amount of maximum strike benefit fixed.....	5	4
Amount of minimum strike benefit fixed.....	1	0
Total.....	110	47

half million or one million dollars, in others it is absurdly small.<sup>22</sup> After its exhaustion, which occurs during the early stages of a strike, recourse must be had to the method of special assessments.

The remaining fifty associations pay such sums as the funds in the treasury justify. Thirteen of them, however, maintain a strike reserve, and give probably as adequate aid to the local unions in their conflicts as those which promise a definite benefit. One of the fifty associations gives no aid, however, until the local union has exhausted all of its own funds,<sup>23</sup> and the proportion contributed by many of the others is undoubtedly small. In many, therefore, of the eighty-one unions which attempt to regulate only strikes

<sup>22</sup> Six associations provide that a certain proportion of the per capita tax must be set aside until a strike reserve fund of the following amounts has been accumulated:—

Street and Electric Railway Employees.....	\$1,000,000
Railway Trainmen .....	300,000
Locomotive Firemen .....	250,000
Railway Conductors .....	200,000
Elevator Constructors .....	50,000
Stone Cutters .....	4,000

Five associations do not allow their strike reserve fund to sink below the following minimum amounts:—

Granite Cutters .....	\$25,000
Tin Plate Workers .....	10,000
Plasterers .....	4,000
Slate Workers .....	300
Wood Carvers .....	\$1 per member

<sup>23</sup> Cloth Hat and Cap Makers.

maintained by funds from the central treasury such conflicts are supported financially by and hence are controlled largely by the local societies.

The most advanced stage has been attained by the twenty-nine organizations which require that no strikes, whether supported from local or national funds, can be declared without the consent of the national authorities,<sup>24</sup> and sixteen couple the prohibition with the threat to expel the local union or to fill the places of the strikers with union men if this rule is not observed. All of the twenty-nine unions require also that the national regulations regarding the declaration and conduct of strikes must apply to all such conflicts without exception. In addition to the above unions, the Boot and Shoe Workers forbid unauthorized strikes in factories using the union label, and the Garment Workers forbid such strikes when the firm recognizes the union or when more than twenty-five members are involved. The Cloth Hat and Cap Makers forbid the local union to strike without the consent of the national union when all of its members are involved.

The trades which vest control over strikes in the national unions are those engaged in transportation, such as the Seamen or the Railroad Trainmen, and those producing a commodity with a wide territorial market, such as the Iron, Steel and Tin Plate Workers, the Mine Workers, and the Hatters. These trades desire centralized control over strikes for several reasons. In the first place, with the growth in

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<sup>24</sup> The local unions are forbidden to strike without consent of the international authorities in the following trades: Atlantic Coast Seamen, Compressed Air Workers, Glove Workers, Hatters, Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, Machinists, Maintenance-of-Way Employees, Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, Molders, Paper Box Workers, Pavers, Printers, Quarry Workers, Railroad Telegraphers, Railroad Trainmen, Railway Employees, Railway Expressmen, Retail Clerks, Saw Smiths, Slate Workers, Stove Mounters and Steel Range Workers, Street and Electric Railway Employees, Switchmen, Tin Plate Workers, United Mine Workers, Window Glass Workers, and Wire Weavers.

The Cigar Makers and the Piano, Organ and Instrument Workers do not expressly forbid such conflicts, but prevent them indirectly by prohibiting the local societies from collecting or expending money to support strikes not sanctioned by the international union.

the size of the business establishment and the rise of employers' associations, strikes involve numbers too large to be maintained from local funds, and the creation of an adequate national fund for this purpose becomes necessary. Thus in the Cigar Makers' International Union the development of a central strike fund from about 1880 corresponds in time to the growth in the size of the business establishment following the introduction of machine processes.<sup>25</sup> The inauguration of a central strike fund by the Iron Molders in 1890 followed quickly the formation of the National Defense Association, organized to wage war on national lines against the Iron Molders' Union. In consequence of a prearranged plan on the part of the stove founders, the strike began in 1887 in a single shop in St. Louis, and spread rapidly to other shops controlled by the Defense Association until five thousand molders in fifteen cities were involved. Against such united opposition on the part of employers the local unions are powerless to struggle. Within recent years, therefore, all strikes of Iron Molders have been maintained from national funds.<sup>26</sup> In the second place, in trades producing for a wide territorial market the final stage—prohibition of unauthorized strikes—has resulted from a desire, first, to prevent the declaration of strikes in violation of national agreements, and, second, to prevent unwise disastrous conflicts which cause reductions of wages not only in the community where a strike is declared, but sympathetically in other communities also.

Contrarily, in trades serving a local market strikes are usually managed by the local unions, first, because conditions of employment in one place are not much affected by those in another, and second, because, the size of the business establishment being small, strikes involve usually only a few workers and can be maintained from local funds. For

<sup>25</sup> Report of the President, in *Cigar Makers' Official Journal*, October, 1881, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> F. W. Hilbert, "Trade Agreements in the Iron Molders' Union," in *Studies in American Trade Unionism*, ed. by Hollander and Barnett.

this reason, strikes in the building trades are supported financially by and hence are controlled very largely by the local societies. Thus, the strike benefits given by the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union, formed in 1866, have always been wholly inadequate in amount, and have been paid from revenue collected by the unsatisfactory method of special assessments. The local societies have relied almost wholly on their own resources, and have appealed very rarely to the international union for aid. For example, from 1871 until 1880 not a single strike received the financial support of the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union, though provision for such support existed in the constitution. From 1880 to 1890, on the average only one strike each year was supported by the federal association, though strikes of a purely local character occurred frequently. During the hard times succeeding the panic of 1893 there were several years when the international association paid not a single strike benefit, though complaint was made about the number of strikes declared by the local societies at such an inauspicious time.<sup>27</sup> In 1897 this association adopted a rule that a strike must involve all members of a subordinate union before it should receive support from the international treasury. Strikes against an individual firm or against a minority of the employers of a city must be maintained by the local unions.<sup>28</sup>

The policy of the Journeymen Plumbers has been very similar.<sup>29</sup> Very rarely has the international union furnished money for the maintenance of strikes, and in 1900 a rule was adopted to the effect that no aid should be granted from the central treasury unless at least one third of the members of the local society were involved in a strike. The Journeymen Horseshoers' International Union, formed in 1874, whose members work under industrial conditions similar to those in the building trades, does not pay strike benefits of

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<sup>27</sup> Annual Reports of the President and Secretary, 1893-1896.

<sup>28</sup> Constitution, 1897.

<sup>29</sup> Plumbers, Gas Fitters and Steam Fitters' Journal, October, 1895, p. 3; November, 1895, pp. 5-7.



definite amount, but grants aid to local unions when engaged in serious difficulties. The International Typographical Union, a large part of whose members are engaged in meeting the needs of local customers, also made no attempt to pay strike benefits until 1885. Moreover, until a few years ago, the annual receipts from the strike tax were barely sufficient to pay continuous strike benefits to eighty men.

The need of an adequate national strike fund has begun to be felt even in trades producing for a local market, since with the growth of local employers' associations strikes more and more frequently involve all or a large part of the organized members of the trade in a community, and with the establishment of such a fund there has followed national control over local conflicts. But with the exception of the Pavers, Rammers, Flaggers, Bridge and Curb Stone Setters, the Printers, and the Street and Electric Railway Employees, none of the trades serving a local patronage forbid subordinate societies to strike without the sanction of the national authorities.

National unions, particularly in those trades producing commodities with a wide territorial market, have striven from the first years of their organization to establish uniform conditions of employment for all competing manufacturers. The attainment of such uniformity has been a difficult task. The adoption of a national scale of wages was discussed at conventions of the Iron Molders before the Civil War, but not until 1891 was a uniform scale adopted for one branch of the trade, namely, molders working in stove foundries. For other branches of the trade a national scale of wages has never been attained. Apprenticeship rules were adopted at the first national conventions of the Bricklayers and Masons,<sup>30</sup> Granite Cutters,<sup>31</sup> Plumbers,<sup>32</sup> Pattern Makers, and other unions. As all of these

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<sup>30</sup> Constitution, 1867; Constitution, 1876.

<sup>31</sup> Constitution, 1877; Constitution, 1884.

<sup>32</sup> Proceedings, 1891, pp. 25-26; Proceedings, 1896, in Supplement to United Association Journal, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 40-42; Proceedings, 1898.

found that enforcement was impracticable, the rules were soon abolished, in some cases never to be readopted.

One obstacle to the establishment of uniform conditions of employment has been the inability of the weak local societies to secure as good wages, hours, and other conditions as the strong local unions enjoyed. The Iron Molders' Union began to regulate apprenticeship in 1864, but in 1876 the president of the organization declared that the weak societies had not compelled and probably never would compel the employers to conform to the international apprenticeship rules. Even in recent years, during the existence of national agreements with employers, complaints have been made that these rules were not being enforced by some of the weaker societies.<sup>33</sup> Frequently, indeed, national organizations are forced to exempt certain subordinate unions from the application of rules governing the terms of the labor contract because the effort of these subordinate unions to enforce such regulations would undoubtedly be suicidal. For example, certain new and poorly organized local societies of bricklayers which could not compel employers to accept the nine-hour work day required by the international organization were repeatedly granted extensions of time in which to enforce it. Finally, in 1889, twenty-one local unions whose members were working longer than nine hours had their charters revoked, and for the same reason forty-one applications for new charters were refused. Such severe measures were found inexpedient, and the next convention vested the international executive board with discretion to suspend the application of the nine-hour rule to newly organized societies whenever necessary. This policy of the Bricklayers has been followed by various other trades.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> In 1864 the Iron Molders' Union merely attempted to regulate the term of apprenticeship (Constitution, in Proceedings, 1864). The ratio of apprentices to journeymen was fixed at some time prior to 1874 (Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1876). For recent reports of non-enforcement, see Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1895; Iron Molders' Journal, October, 1904, p. 750.

<sup>34</sup> Proceedings, 1886; Proceedings, 1888; Proceedings, 1889.

Another obstacle in the way of uniform regulation of apprenticeship has been the variation in the methods of working in different places. The length of the working day is not affected, indeed, by such differences, but the term of apprenticeship and the rate of wages are very much affected. Thus, in the cigar making industry the varying degree to which new machine processes and division of labor have been introduced in different parts of the country has made difficult the adoption of uniform apprentice rules. In Florida the Cuban and Spanish cigar makers work almost exclusively by hand. In many sections of the country the "mold" is used on all cigars produced. In Baltimore and other places both hand-made and mold-made cigars are turned out by the same factory. Sometimes one man makes the whole cigar. Sometimes a team of workers is employed; that is, one person makes the filler and another rolls the wrapper. A team worker using the mold can learn how to do his part of the work in a few months, while several years are required to attain skill in making the whole cigar by hand. Evidently, therefore, a uniform apprentice rule for cigar makers in all parts of the country is impracticable.

Similarly, the journeymen who make brooms by machine in a large eastern factory cannot be required to demand the same wages as the hand-workers in the small shops of the West. The cigar maker of the Atlantic Coast, the Pacific Coast, and certain sections of the Middle West who manufactures a high grade of cigars demands a larger wage than his less skilled fellow-craftsman of the Pennsylvania district who makes a cheap grade of cigars. The New England die cutter who makes only shoe die cutters requires less skill and hence receives lower wages than the workers in the shops of New York City where more complicated dies of various sorts are produced. Differences in the cost of living must also be taken into account in fixing wages. Because of such differences, employees of the "meat trust" receive higher wages for the same kind of work in Chicago than in Butte, Montana, or in Kansas City.

Apprenticeship was usually the first of the conditions of employment to be regulated by the federal organizations, and is the one most commonly regulated by them at the present day, probably because in all trades the interurban movement of labor renders local apprenticeship rules wholly ineffective to limit the supply of labor. About fifty unions, most of which are in comparatively unskilled trades, make no attempt to regulate apprenticeship, either locally or nationally. Forty-nine of the remaining eighty trades maintain national apprenticeship rules. The scope of these rules, however, varies widely. Two unions do nothing more than fix the age at which one may become an apprentice. Thirty-two of the remaining forty-seven designate both the term of apprenticeship and the ratio of apprentices to journeymen. The others fix either the term or the ratio, but not both.

The establishment of a uniform working day for all subordinate unions was agitated by the Iron Molders, Machinists and Blacksmiths, Ship Carpenters and Caulkers, Coach Makers, and Bricklayers during the period immediately following the Civil War. One of the purposes of the National Labor Union, a federation of all organized crafts founded in 1866, was to secure the adoption of an eight-hour day by all international trade unions. The early federal organization of coopers ordered that all members work not more than ten hours a day after May 1, 1871.<sup>35</sup> The Painters' Grand Lodge, organized in 1871, started at once an agitation in favor of an eight-hour day for all members of the trade.<sup>36</sup> The Iron, Steel and Tin Workers adopted their first rule regarding the length of the working day in 1880. The Cigar Makers began their efforts at national regulation of the hours of labor in 1881, and the Bricklayers in 1887. Nevertheless, at the present time only a small number of national unions, about eighteen of the one hundred and thirty studied, have a definite rule to the effect that members must

<sup>35</sup> Coopers' Monthly Journal, December, 1870.

<sup>36</sup> The Carpenter, February, 1882.

not work more than a certain number of hours each day.<sup>37</sup> Two other international organizations fix the number of hours in the working day for manufacturers who have been granted the use of the union label.<sup>38</sup>

The maintenance of national wage scales has been so difficult that even the older organizations have succeeded in establishing them only within recent years. The Glass Bottle Blowers did not have a uniform scale of wages until 1890, and not until that same year did the Iron Molders secure a national scale for stove molders. The Window Glass Workers established a national scale in 1901, the Hatters (for the makers of stiff hats) in 1902, the Potters in 1904, the Garment Workers and the Granite Cutters in 1905. Yet at present more national unions regulate wages than hours of labor. Twenty-five national and international unions regulate the wages of all members,<sup>39</sup> and five others regulate the wages of a certain class or subdivision of their members.<sup>40</sup> Four more require that all employees in factories which have been granted the use of the union label must receive a certain minimum wage.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> These are the following unions: Bricklayers and Masons, Cigar Makers, Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, Coopers, Cutting Die and Cutter Makers, Elastic Goring Weavers, Elevator Constructors, Glass Bottle Blowers, Granite Cutters, Hatters, Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Iron Molders, Paper Makers, Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, Plumbers, Print Cutters, Printers, Table Knife Grinders, and Wood, Wire, and Metal Lathers.

<sup>38</sup> The Travellers' Goods and Leather Novelty Workers, and the Carpenters and Joiners for members who are machine wood workers.

<sup>39</sup> These are the following unions: Cloth, Hat and Cap Makers, Compressed Air Workers, Coopers, Cutting Die and Cutter Makers, Elastic Goring Weavers, Flint Glass Workers, Glass Bottle Blowers, Granite Cutters, Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, Lace Operatives, Leather Workers on Horse Goods, Machine Textile Printers, Pilots, Potters, Print Cutters, Saw Smiths, Shirt, Waist and Laundry Workers, Stove Mounters, Table Knife Grinders, Tin Plate Workers, Wall Paper Machine Printers, Window Glass Cutters and Flatteners, Window Glass Workers, and Wire Weavers.

<sup>40</sup> Bill Posters and Billers, for those travelling with circuses; Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, for those working on bridges outside the jurisdiction of any local union; Garment Workers, for the makers of shirts and overalls; Hatters, for makers of stiff hats; Theatrical Stage Employees, for those travelling with theatrical companies and not in the employ of local houses.

<sup>41</sup> Carpenters, for machine wood workers, Cigar Makers, Printers, and Wood Workers.

Fifty-eight national and international unions do not attempt to fix the conditions of employment, and leave all regulation of such matters to the local societies. Fourteen other organizations have adopted national apprenticeship rules, but do not determine the conditions of employment for journeymen. In many of these seventy-two associations, however, the officers and delegates to conventions use their influence to bring about uniformity. Resolutions, requesting the local societies not to accept less than a certain wage or to work longer than certain hours have been adopted from time to time by the annual conventions of some of these unions. Thirteen or more of them require that all local agreements must receive the sanction of the international officers, and thus give these officers an opportunity to urge societies lagging behind the others to pursue a more aggressive policy in bargaining with employers. Finally, in those organizations maintaining an adequate strike fund, the officials vested with control over its disbursement promote uniform conditions of employment by supporting the strikes of those societies which have secured less favorable terms than the others. Save in a few instances, however, no very great amount of uniformity has been brought about by any of these methods.

The extent to which the remaining forty-eight national and international unions interfere in matters of collective bargaining is not easy to measure. On one occasion the writer, who had spoken of the many detailed shop rules in the constitution of a certain national organization, was told by its secretary that none of these rules were mandatory. They had been adopted merely to encourage local unions to secure such conditions from employers whenever it should be possible. The same policy has been followed by other unions. Moreover, most national organizations provide the minimum or worst conditions that the local societies are permitted to accept. If the standard set by the national union is very low, most or all of its subordinate societies may have secured better conditions, and hence the national regulations may exert little or no influence.

Two facts are clear, however. In the first place, the extent to which the remaining forty-eight national or international organizations interfere in matters of collective bargaining varies widely. At the one extreme are five national organizations whose only attempt to regulate the conditions of employment has been the adoption of a few shop rules relating to the employment of foremen, methods of work, and other questions of shop management. At the other extreme are four organizations which regulate practically all the conditions of employment save a few minor details which remain under the control of the local union. In the second place, only a small group of national unions—not more than nineteen out of one hundred and thirty—regulate three of the four matters of collective bargaining here considered, that is, apprenticeship, wages, hours, and shop management.<sup>42</sup> Small unions such as the Cutting Die and Cutter Makers, Print Cutters, Saw Smiths, and Wall Paper Machine Printers, particularly if they are concentrated in a limited area (as are the Elastic Goring Weavers and the Table Knife Grinders), have been especially successful in establishing uniform conditions of employment.

Many of the national associations which have been successful in regulating the conditions of employment have not been able to exercise much control over the declaration and conduct of strikes. Regulations concerning the internal administration of the local societies bear little relation to the nature of the employment, and have been adopted by national unions which exert little influence over matters of

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<sup>42</sup> The following unions regulate all four of these matters by collective bargaining: Glass Bottle Blowers, Granite Cutters, Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, and Table Knife Grinders.

The following regulate three matters for all members and the fourth for part of the members: Cloth, Hat and Cap Makers, shop matters only for factories using the label; Hatters, wages only for the makers of stiff hats; Printers, wages only for offices which have the label.

The following regulate three matters of collective bargaining: Cigar Makers, Coopers, Cutting Die and Cutter Makers, Elastic Goring Weavers, Flint Glass Workers, Garment Workers, Iron Molders, Print Cutters, Saw Smiths, Wall Paper Machine Printers, Window Glass Cutters and Flatteners, Window Glass Workers.

collective bargaining. The Cigar Makers and the Iron Molders are centralized in all three respects. The federal organizations of hatters, iron, steel and tin workers, and window glass workers not only fix most of the conditions of employment, but also forbid unauthorized strikes. All of these are old unions whose members are engaged in producing commodities with a wide territorial market. On the other hand, the federal associations of a considerable group of unions are very decentralized. Among these are the Blast Furnace Workers, who, though producing for a national market, are unskilled and were organized very recently; the Bricklayers, who, though organized for many years, serve a local patronage; and the Hod Carriers, who are unskilled, were recently organized, and serve a local patronage.

The early federal trade unions secured little obedience from the constituent local societies, although the requirements were few. The chief obligations to the national union were quarterly or monthly reports concerning the condition of the trade, wages, hours, members admitted, and members expelled, and an account of local receipts and expenditures. Even these few duties were not fulfilled. In 1864 the president of the Iron Molders asked why local officials so persistently neglected to send monthly reports.<sup>43</sup> Ten or fifteen years later the presidents of the Iron Molders were still asking the same question.<sup>44</sup> Frequently, also, dues and special assessments remained unpaid. In 1874 the secretary of the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union reported that none of the local unions had paid all the quarterly dues during the previous year. One had paid for three quarters, most of them for one or two quarters, a small group had paid nothing at all.<sup>45</sup> In 1873 the Cigar Makers' International Union abandoned for a time its efforts to pay a death benefit because the local unions failed to pay their assessments. On one occasion early in the history of the Brick-

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<sup>43</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1864.

<sup>44</sup> For example, see Iron Molders' Journal, April 30, 1875.

<sup>45</sup> Report of the Secretary, in Proceedings, 1874.



layers' and Masons' International Union the general president, desiring funds for the support of a certain strike, issued a circular asking for voluntary contributions instead of levying compulsory assessments. A larger number of local unions, he declared, responded to appeals for voluntary contributions than to demands for compulsory assessments.<sup>46</sup>

The local unions were bound to the central association by such slender ties that threat of suspension had little effect in compelling obedience to international rules. Indeed, local unions frequently seceded, sometimes for the flimsiest reasons. Thus, the Cincinnati society of cigar makers seceded from the international union of the trade about 1876 because of its opposition to the international rule admitting women to membership.<sup>47</sup> The society reaffiliated in April, 1878, only to secede again in January, 1879, because it objected to contributing money for the support of certain strikes sanctioned by the international association.<sup>48</sup> For some years there was in Chicago an independent local union known as the United Order of American Bricklayers. In August, 1884, it joined the international union of the trade. In 1886 it withdrew because of the decision of the general session regarding the payment of its accumulated dues and assessments.<sup>49</sup>

In all trades there have existed local societies which have maintained their independence of the federal association for a longer or shorter period. Independent local unions seem to have flourished particularly in San Francisco, perhaps because the industrial isolation of the cities on the Pacific Coast has made cooperation with societies of the trade in other parts of the country less imperative. The San Francisco local union of iron molders severed its connection with the federal association of the trade in 1872, and maintained its independence for some years.<sup>50</sup> Until 1886 the society

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<sup>46</sup> Report of the President, in MS. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Convention, 1870.

<sup>47</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, March 10, June 10, 1878.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., May, 1880.

<sup>49</sup> Report of the Secretary, in Proceedings, 1886, p. 38.

<sup>50</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1872.

of cigar makers in San Francisco refused to join the international union. The brewery workmen of San Francisco broke away from the United Brewery Workmen of America in 1889, and remained independent for several years,<sup>51</sup> and other instances might be noted. Independent local unions have been and are still particularly numerous among the boot and shoe workers. Undoubtedly, the lack for many years of any one central union of boot and shoe workers has tended to promote sectionalism. In some of the old centers of the industry local societies have maintained an independent existence for generations, and are reluctant to merge themselves into any federation. Many of the boot and shoe workers were organized into local assemblies of the Knights of Labor,<sup>52</sup> and these local assemblies since the decline of the Knights have held aloof from the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union.

The different sections of the country are, however, being continually knit together in closer economic ties. Employers separated by wide stretches of territory are competing keenly, and a slight change in the rate of wages paid by one affects the amount of business done by the others. The independent local union in industries with a national market is becoming more and more impotent to regulate the conditions of employment, and is rapidly disappearing.

Such independent societies still flourish in industries which, like building construction, satisfy local needs. In these industries the workers in one community are not hampered in their efforts to improve the conditions of employment by conditions existing in other places. They must protect their wage scale, however, from underbidding by workmen who come from other places. In the building trades this is accomplished to some extent by means of the "exclusive agreement," under which the contractors agree to employ only union men, provided that the trade unionists

<sup>51</sup> Brauer-Zeitung, January 28, 1893.

<sup>52</sup> Discussions of the independent local unions of boot and shoe workers can be found in nearly every number of the union journal from 1900 to 1904.

agree on their part to work only for employers who are parties to the compact. The local union, thus protected from incoming journeymen, can bid defiance to the federal association.

Independent local unions have been very numerous in the building trades, particularly in the large cities, where the societies, usually with a large membership, are able to maintain fairly adequate funds for the payment of strike and other benefits. A notable example has been the Chicago local union of bricklayers, which has a membership of five thousand. Though Chicago is said to be "the dumping ground for all bricklayers going west," the Chicago local union has been amply protected by its exclusive agreement.<sup>58</sup> The painters, decorators, and paper hangers of New York have also maintained an independent society for many years. Officials of such independent local unions have declared to the writer that they have nothing to gain and even something to lose by federating with the international union of the trade. If, for example, they joined the federation, members of sister societies would have to be admitted without payment of an initiation fee, and so the revenue received from this source would be lost. The younger members who wish to travel desire an alliance with the international union, since such an alliance would help them to find employment in other places, but these would-be wanderers are a small minority.

As has been already pointed out, however, even in the building industry contractors in different cities are beginning to compete, and cooperation between local societies for purposes of collective bargaining is becoming more and more necessary. In addition, the exclusive agreement has fallen into disfavor because it has been used to build up the power of employers' associations, and this power has been used against the union. Certainly this device could serve only temporarily to retard the disappearance of the independent local union in these trades.

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<sup>58</sup> Proceedings of the Twenty-ninth Annual Convention of the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union, 1895, pp. 13-16, 46-52.

The American Federation of Labor has been used as a means to force independent societies to join the international unions. The Federation withholds its cooperation from the independent societies; and the failure to obtain this cooperation is a serious handicap, particularly to those trades which make important use of the boycott or the union label, since without its aid a boycott cannot be effectively maintained nor patronage secured for goods bearing the union label. Independent societies of boot and shoe workers have been forced to join the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union because the manufacturers found that they could not increase their sales by attaching the label of such societies.<sup>54</sup> The American Federation of Labor has a rule that a local society suspended from or refusing to join the international union of the trade cannot affiliate with the central labor union or federation of trades in its community. Sometimes central labor unions sympathize with the local societies and are reluctant to enforce this rule, but on various occasions they have been compelled to do so under threat of expulsion by the officials of the Federation.<sup>55</sup>

The most potent factor in strengthening the allegiance of the local unions to the international union and in promoting obedience to the rules has been the growth in the activities of these central organizations. Often an increase in dues was opposed in the early international unions because it was argued that if the local unions refused to pay low dues, they certainly would not pay high ones. Experience has shown, however, exactly the contrary to be true. The support of various activities from a central rather than a local treasury gives an added value to membership in the federation. Thus the guarantee of adequate support of members on strike has

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, *Shoe Workers' Journal*, February and March, 1903, pp. 26-28; Report of President, in *Proceedings*, 1904.

<sup>55</sup> The Federated Trades Council of the Pacific Coast was suspended by the American Federation of Labor for failure to expel the independent San Francisco society of brewery workmen, and was reinstated only on the promise to carry out this decision (*Brauer-Zeitung*, December 19, 26, 1891; January 28, 1893). For another instance, see *Brauer-Zeitung*, December 9, 1899; January 13, 1900.

not only increased international control over strikes, but has developed a desire on the part of the local unions to pay their assessments promptly and otherwise obey the rules, in order to be eligible to the benefit in case of need. The members transfer their primary allegiance from the local to the central organization when sick, death, and out-of-work benefits are paid from national funds. For this reason, we find the union leaders who favor a strongly centralized international union advocating strenuously at meetings of convention or in the editorial columns of the trade journal the payment of such benefits by the federal associations.

## PART III

### THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT

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#### CHAPTER VII

#### THE SOURCES OF THE TRADE-UNION CONSTITUTION

American trade unionists, in piecing together their machinery of government, have borrowed from various sources. Information concerning the rise of local societies of workers in the same town or city is so fragmentary that all statements concerning the sources from which they drew their form of government must be merely guesses and therefore unprofitable. Our knowledge of the federation of these local societies into national or international trade unions, which occurred much later, is much more definite, and the influences affecting their governmental development can be traced.

The secret or fraternal societies have exercised an important influence on the government of the national unions. The rules adopted by the first permanent national trade union in the United States, the National Typographical Union, were apparently borrowed by the committee which drew them up in 1851 "almost without change except for unimportant omissions from the Constitution of the Right Worthy Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows of the United States of America. No mention of this fact was made in the report of the committee, but a comparison of the two constitutions reveals such striking similarities, that the connection between them can be clearly established."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> G. E. Barnett, "Origin of the Constitution of the Typographical Union," in Johns Hopkins University Circular, new ser., 1905, no. 6.

The constitution of the Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows was well suited for the kind of organization which the founders of the International Typographical Union sought to create. The proposed activities of the association were few in number, the primary one being control over journeymen who moved from one place to another. This movement had until then been partly controlled by correspondence between the local societies. There was needed a very decentralized form of government, clothed chiefly with legislative powers. Of such a decentralized form was the government of the Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows, in which the principal organ of government was the representative council of delegates from the local societies. During the brief period of a few days that this convention was in session it exercised legislative, judicial, and executive functions. The officers were primarily such as were necessary for the conduct of this assembly, and between its meetings they had few if any duties to perform.

The early constitutions of two national unions formed soon after that of the Printers, the United Operative Mule Spinners of New England<sup>2</sup> and the Grand Forge of the Sons of Vulcan,<sup>3</sup> show no trace of the influence of the Odd Fellows either in wording or subject matter. On the other hand, the Iron Molders, who early established a powerful organization, copied the constitution of the Printers very closely at their first national convention in 1859. Whole sections are identical. Here and there a word has been changed or a sentence left out. Sometimes a section has been much shortened by the omission of several sentences, as in the following article:—

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<sup>2</sup> Constitution and General By-Laws of the United Operative Mule Spinners of New England, Benevolent and Protective Association. Fall River, 1858.

<sup>3</sup> The earliest available constitution of the National Forge of the United Sons of Vulcan, established in 1860, is that contained in the Proceedings, 1869, in Vulcan Record, vol. i, no. 4.

CONSTITUTION OF NATIONAL  
TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION  
Adopted 1851

Article I

Section 1.

This body shall be known by the name of the "National Typographical Union" and shall be acknowledged, respected and obeyed as such by each subordinate union in the country. *It shall possess original and exclusive jurisdiction in all matters pertaining to the fellowship of the craft in the United States.* All subordinate unions shall assemble under its warrant and derive their authority from it enabling them to make all necessary local laws for their own government.

*It shall be the ultimate tribunal to which all matters of general importance to the welfare of the members of the different unions shall be referred and its decision thereon shall be final and conclusive. To it shall belong the power to regulate, fix and determine the customs and usages in regard to all matters appertaining to the craft.* It shall possess inherent powers to establish subordinate unions who shall always act by virtue of a warrant granted by authority of this body.

CONSTITUTION OF NATIONAL  
UNION OF IRON MOLDERS  
Adopted 1859<sup>4</sup>

Article I

Section 1.

The National Union of Iron Molders shall possess original jurisdiction in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the craft in the United States. It shall be the tribunal to which all matters of general importance to the welfare of the members of the different unions shall be referred, and its decision thereon shall be final and conclusive. To it shall belong the power to determine the customs and usages in regard to all matters appertaining to the craft.

Sometimes a whole section has been left out, sometimes a new one inserted. The constitution of the Printers is composed of ten articles, that of the Iron Molders of seven; but the two documents are in most respects identical. There was one significant difference. The Iron Molders, unlike the Printers, made provision for the exercise of executive and judicial powers by a national executive committee during the period between conventions. This committee was, however, too large to perform any real function. It was,

<sup>4</sup> Contained in Synopsis of the Proceedings of the National Convention of Iron Molders, Philadelphia, July 5-7, 1859.



in fact, the annual convention reduced in size, since each local union was required to appoint one of its representatives to the annual convention as a member of the committee.

The Printers retained the constitution which they borrowed from the Odd Fellows practically unchanged until 1885; and its main outlines are still perceptible in the present constitution of their international union. Within four years the Iron Molders had entirely revised their constitution. The rules adopted by the convention of 1863<sup>5</sup> differ widely from those of 1859 in arrangement, wording, and subject matter. The representative convention was retained with undiminished powers; the chief change was the provision of more adequate machinery to carry out executive and judicial functions between the meetings of the convention. With the rapid growth of the activities of the national union, more and more detailed machinery has been created, not only for executive and judicial matters, but also for the legislative work of adopting amendments to the organic law. The Bricklayers and the Cigar Makers, which formed national unions about the close of the Civil War, felt the influence of the Odd Fellows very slightly, since they appropriated the constitution of the Iron Molders as revised in 1863.

The discarding of the Printers' constitution by the Iron Molders is probably to be explained by fundamental differences in the character of the two trades. In iron molding the product finds a national market; in the newspaper part of the printing industry and in much of the jobbing business as well the custom is local. In the case of the Printers, bargaining with employers has been conducted locally; with the Iron Molders, when effective, it has been national. The constitution which was suitable to a highly decentralized organization like that of the Printers was unsuitable to a centralized one like that of the Iron Molders. Similarly, the Bricklayers, engaged in an industry which satisfies local needs, retained the constitution borrowed from the Iron Molders with few changes until very recently. The Cigar

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<sup>5</sup> Contained in Proceedings, 1863.

Makers, who manufacture a commodity which often has a wide territorial market, soon discarded the borrowed constitution, and have not only kept pace with, but to some extent have outdistanced the Iron Molders in establishing a strongly centralized system of national administration and in the elaboration of methods of transacting business between the meetings of convention.

The fraternal orders have also helped in less distinguishable ways to mold the government of American trade unions. In the proceedings of trade unions reference is occasionally made to the system of benefits maintained by fraternal organizations, and the members are urged to copy the best features of these associations. The mystery which surrounds the secret society, the elaborate ceremonies, and the gorgeous regalia have proved very attractive to the American workmen; and these forms and this secrecy they have frequently introduced into their labor unions. The influence of the secret orders is seen also in the use of names, such as "grand lodge," "subordinate lodge," "grand master," "chaplain," "guide," "warden," "inner guard," "outer guard," and "marshal."

During the decade or more following the Civil War secret associations among workmen became the fashion. The best known of these was the once powerful Knights of Labor. There were many others: the Supreme Mechanical Sun, an organization with an extensive ritual and numerous degrees; the Grand Eight-Hour League, and others whose names were never given to the public. Not only in such general associations of workingmen, but also in organizations of particular trades did this desire for secrecy prevail. Among the bricklayers certain local unions in New York and New Jersey withdrew from the national association in 1873 to form the United Order of American Bricklayers, and one reason given for this secession was the desire to form a secret society. Some of the railway unions formed during this period have continued to this day to surround their proceedings with the veil of mystery.

The local unions in particular have borrowed the trap-

pings of the secret societies. Through a peephole in the door the pass word is in some unions solemnly demanded of the member who wishes to enter. Within, the numerous officers are perhaps seated after the manner of secret societies at their stations on different sides of the room. Extensive rituals and gorgeous regalia are often used. Of course the policy of the societies varies widely from the simplest democracy to the most complicated formalities; but secrecy, regalia, and elaborate ritual are certainly not uncommon.

To conclude, the influence of one of the large fraternal orders is to be seen in the constitution of two of the earliest and most powerful trade unions in the United States, and this influence they have transmitted to many unions that have imitated them. The form of government borrowed from the Odd Fellows, in which the representative council or convention was practically the sole organ, broke down, however, with the growth in the powers of the national union. On this simple frame-work, therefore, was superimposed more elaborate machinery to carry out the several functions of government during the period when convention was not in session. The influence of the fraternal orders is also to be seen in the use of names and of elaborate ritual, and in the desire for secrecy in many organizations.

The American unions have profited greatly from the experience of the European organizations, particularly the English unions. Some American organizations were founded by workmen who learned their first lessons in trade unionism in the Old World. The Cotton Mule Spinners' Union of New England was formed by operatives who had emigrated to the mill towns of New England from Lancashire, England,—a very radical trade-union district. The principles of unionism had been bred in these men through several generations, since their forefathers, the old hand mule spinners of Lancashire, had been early pioneers in the formation of trade unions.<sup>6</sup> The American Miners' Association was organized among the miners of Illinois and Missouri

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<sup>6</sup> Boston Herald, October 21, 1875.

about 1861 by an old English miner and a Welsh miner. Many other instances can be cited.

The American associations undoubtedly devoted considerable study to the government and policies of the unions in Europe. In 1864 the president of the Iron Molders' Union suggested that an agent of the association be sent abroad to study the workings of the trade unions and cooperative societies of Great Britain.<sup>7</sup> There is no evidence that this suggestion was adopted, but comparative studies of the features of American and English trade unions and excerpts from the reports of the English society of iron molders and notes of its activities appeared from time to time in the official journal of the organization.

The soft stone cutters, who, after the printers, were among the first to form a national union in the United States, are said to have borrowed their constitution from the soft stone cutters' union of England. The method so common among English unions of adopting amendments to the rules by the initiative and referendum was used by this early association of stone cutters. That is, any amendment initiated or proposed by one local union and seconded by a sufficient number of others was referred to the members of the subordinate unions for adoption or rejection. The governing branch, another governmental feature of many English unions, was used by the American stone cutters. Under this system a certain town is chosen by the representative convention or by vote of all the members as headquarters of the federal organization. The union or unions in the place so chosen are allowed to elect all or most of the executive officers of the national association.<sup>8</sup> The early organization of soft stone cutters apparently went to pieces, and the constitution of the present Journeymen Stone Cutters' Association of North America shows no trace of the English influence.

The Granite Cutters copied the constitution of the early

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<sup>7</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1864.

<sup>8</sup> Circular of the Journeymen Stone Cutters' Association of the United States and Canada for April and May, 1858.

organization of soft stone cutters at their first national convention in 1877,<sup>9</sup> and their form of government is still very similar to that of the English unions. They have held no representative convention since 1880, but adopt all amendments to the constitution by vote of the members. Every five years the headquarters of the organization is chosen by popular vote, and the local unions at headquarters select all the officers and members of the executive board except the secretary-treasurer.

The members of the Cigar Makers' International Union of America, a very efficient organization which has been widely imitated, have been close students of the English unions. Correspondence between the officials of the English and the American societies of cigar makers was begun in 1871, broken off, and resumed in 1876. Letters from the secretary of the Cigar Makers' Mutual Association of England appeared in the trade journal of the American union about 1876.<sup>10</sup> In them the writer made many practical suggestions based on the experiences of his own organization. He suggested, for example, the strict enforcement of the principle of the closed shop, and urged the American union not to fight against the introduction of machinery and not to discriminate against women workers. He sent a copy of the rules of the English society to the officials of the American union. Naturally, therefore, when about 1877 and 1878 the American Union of Cigar Makers entered on a period of growth and reorganization, it turned for guidance to the experience of the English unions.

Those directing the affairs of the Cigar Makers were anxious to build up a strongly centralized organization, and the English unions were of such a character. On a government still reflecting somewhat the influence of the Odd Fellows from its imitation of the Iron Molders' constitution were therefore superimposed various carefully selected features of the more progressive English unions.<sup>11</sup> The local

<sup>9</sup> Granite Cutters' Journal, April, 1877, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> For example, see Cigar Makers' Official Journal, March, April, December, 1876.

<sup>11</sup> Thus see Cigar Makers' Official Journal, August, 1879.

unions have been bound in closer allegiance to the federal association by paying, as do the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters, and other English unions, sick, death, out-of-work, and strike benefits from national funds. The chief features in the financial system of the English union—the accumulation of revenue by periodical collection of dues rather than by special assessments, the distribution of national funds among the treasuries of the local societies rather than its accumulation in a single central treasury, and national control over the income and expenditure of the local union—have all been copied. The Cigar Makers, like the Granite Cutters, have practically ceased to hold conventions, and refer all important questions to a vote of the members.

The features of the English societies have, however, been only in a limited way engrafted on the structure of the American unions. A number of associations make no use of the referendum, and very few have entirely ceased to hold conventions. The majority have retained the representative assembly, but during the interval between its sessions refer certain limited kinds of questions to popular vote. Because the members of the union in each section of the country demand representation on the board of management, the system of the governing branch has been distinctly unpopular in American organizations. It has been adopted by very few trades, not even by a trade like that of the cigar makers, which has felt so strongly the influence of the English societies. The American unions are much more decentralized. The conditions of employment are usually regulated by the local societies, which jealously oppose any increase in the functions of the federal organizations. The English associations have the advantage of compactness, their membership being included within a territory not larger than one of the average American States. Cost of living, methods of production, transportation facilities, and other conditions vary slightly, and uniformity can be obtained with comparative ease. On the other hand, the

American unions have extended their jurisdiction over an economically diversified territory including not merely the United States, but also Canada and Mexico, and within the last few years even the West Indies and the far distant Hawaiian and Philippine Islands.

The possible influence of the American political system is too intangible to measure. It is perhaps to be seen in the respect often shown for the representative form of government, and in the attempts to make the national union a federation of state associations,<sup>12</sup> in spite of the fact that the natural territorial divisions of the union, as determined by competitive conditions, seldom correspond with the States. Trade unionists also make at times stilted comparisons between the American judicial system and their own methods of appeal from a lower to a higher authority. Specific imitation of the American political system is, however, very difficult to discover.

Because the American unions have borrowed so freely from one another, the influences felt by only a few have been extended quickly to the others. The Granite Cutters and the Cigar Makers have made the methods of the English unions familiar to American workmen who have had no direct knowledge of these foreign societies. Through the Printers and the Cigar Makers the influence of the Odd Fellows has been communicated to other trades. Certain notably strong and efficient unions have been especial favorites of the imitators. The Operative Potters at their first national convention borrowed very largely from the constitution, by-laws, and ritual of the American Flint Glass Workers because, it was said, they wished to "pattern after one of the most successful labor organizations of the day." The government and policies of the Cigar Makers have been widely imitated. The Piano and Organ Workers have, with a few minor changes, practically adopted their entire constitution. The rules for the holding of popular elections

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Barnett, *The Printers*, p. 27.

observed in the Metal Polishers' International Union are practically identical with those of the Cigar Makers, save for the elimination of several unimportant sections. Even the long established and powerful Iron Molders' Union has borrowed particular features of the Cigar Makers' elaborate system of financial administration.

Frequently there is great similarity between the constitutions of workers in kindred trades or industries, the younger unions borrowing from the older ones. The Tobacco Workers have imitated very closely the constitution of the Cigar Makers, and the constitutions of the various unions of railway employees are markedly similar. The Quarry Workers and the Paving Cutters have copied very closely the structure of the Granite Cutters, and the Hod Carriers that of the Bricklayers. The form of government in American trade unions is not, however, of a uniform pattern. On the contrary, as we shall see throughout this study, the widest variety exists. The American trade unionists are also not mere imitators of others. Often the machinery of government is a patchwork of pieces selected from various sources, but these pieces have been reshaped, and put together into new combinations to suit needs. Each association has also originated certain devices of its own.

Of course, the governmental efficiency of a union is largely determined by the intelligence and selfcontrol of its members. Even if two unions have almost identical rules, the administration of these rules may be vastly different. In one trade, where perhaps brute strength rather than skill is required, the machinery of government may run very badly. The members give little obedience to the national officers; the officers in turn exercise the widest discretion in interpreting the rules, and even break them in emergency. The members are whimsical in punishing for violations of the rules, now expelling and hounding a supposed traitor to the cause of unionism, now dealing leniently with a man chronically careless in his observance of his financial and other obligations. In the meetings a few fire-eaters are



sometimes allowed to override the counsels of the thoughtful. Wire-pulling and boss control at times prevail. In another association the same machinery of government may run smoothly. "The officers are honest and efficient; there is a wholesome respect for the rules; and decisions are reached after careful and deliberate judgment. Strikes in one trade are conducted in a quiet, business-like way,—so quiet and "tame," in fact, that they are uninteresting, and hence receive scant notice in out-of-the-way corners of the daily newspapers. Strikes in the other trade are marked by spectacular rowdyism and mismanagement, and, being excellent "story," figure in the public press as examples of the failure of trade unionism.

Another factor in trade-union development, potent, yet difficult to measure, is that of leadership. One wonders how far efficient leadership is responsible for the strong business-like organization which the Cigar Makers, a body of comparatively unskilled workers, have been able to build up despite the introduction of machinery and the formation of the tobacco trust. Certainly, at the most crucial and formative period of its history, the influence of two leaders is apparent. One, the president of the union, with the methods of the student, for fourteen years sought in many quarters at home and abroad the means to strengthen his organization. At the conventions of the union and in the pages of its official journal he put forth again and again the arguments in favor of the policies which he advocated, and at last succeeded in convincing even the most conservative. At all meetings of convention there was also to be found the present head of the American Federation of Labor, formerly a cigar maker, ever progressive and likewise ever aggressive and belligerent. The Iron Molders still revere the memory of William H. Silvis, one of their first presidents, who was so influential in determining the form of the organization during its early and plastic stage. The Miners have been fortunate in their leaders, from Daniel Weaver and John Siney, whose names are associated with the early ephemeral

national unions of the trade, to John Mitchell, during whose administration the loosely knit federation of district associations known as the United Mine Workers has been able to exercise really important functions. In most trades there can be found leaders who have left some mark of their influence on the structure and activities of their associations.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MINOR BODIES

The machinery of government of the shop meeting has always been simple and informal. Usually some one has been elected to preside at meetings held within the industrial establishment, and when the need has arisen, special committees have been created to lay the demands of the journeymen before the employer. At a very early date the journeymen in the printing shops of England and America were organized into "chapels." The chapel held meetings whenever a disagreement arose with the employer or between the journeymen themselves, and it was presided over by the so-called "father of the chapel."

Meetings held within the factory itself are so very inconvenient that they are rapidly disappearing, and all functions are being delegated to some official or to a small committee. The constitution of the New York Typographical Society for 1833 provided that "if the majority in large offices decide to delegate their power to chapels, consisting of five, seven or nine members, of which the father to be always one, it shall be competent for them to do so." Sometimes, because of objections from employers, shop meetings have been absolutely forbidden. For example, the hat manufacturers of Danbury, Connecticut, objected to the interruptions to work caused by the frequent "shop calls" of their employees. They declared that while such meetings were being held, the fires went out and the felt in process of preparation was ruined. In 1885 the manufacturers obtained from the local union an agreement by which "shop calls" were prohibited. Usually the workmen in each establishment elect a small committee known as the shop or mill committee. To this committee any member or members may bring a grievance. The committee, if it deems neces-

sary, endeavors to adjust the matter with the employer, and failing to do so, submits the difficulty to the local union. In each establishment there is also a shop official known among the Printers as the father of the chapel, among the Cigar Makers as the shop collector, and in many trades as the shop steward. Sometimes he is elected by the local union, sometimes by his fellow-workmen in the same factory. The shop steward collects the dues of members. In closed or union shops he keeps watch that only those in good standing with the society are permitted to work. He reports to the local union the number of unfilled positions in the factory. He detects and reports any deviation from the standard scale of wages, hours, and other working conditions established by the society. When his organization affixes a label to union-made goods, he often has charge of distributing and attaching these labels at the factory.

The government of the local union is essentially government by mass-meeting. The whole body of members, assembling once each month, once each fortnight, or oftener, is the final authority for the transaction of all business,—legislative, executive, and judicial. The general meeting may adopt amendments to the by-laws, may suspend or expel a member, may order the purchase of an account book, or may declare a strike.

Usually the meetings of the local union are held in some convenient hall. Sometimes several local unions join together to hire or purchase a building where each may have its office and meeting room. Often the cheapest and most convenient place is a room over a store or perhaps over a saloon. The character of these meeting halls varies widely. Some are forlornly barren, uncarpeted, containing only a decrepit table and formidable rows of long dilapidated benches. Others are cozy and attractive. In one such room visited, for example, the floor was covered with rugs, and the chairs were not arranged in formal rows, but were disposed irregularly along the sides of the room. During the meetings the several officers were stationed in various parts

of the room with something of the ceremony of fraternal orders. They sat upon raised platforms, before small round column-like tables painted in black and cream and gold. Cases filled with gay regalia and shelves lined with books and periodicals added to the attractiveness of the room.

In the trade union the faults of government by mass-meeting are the ones common to all such assemblies. One difficulty is to secure regular attendance of members. Often in small societies a quorum can be secured with difficulty. Some local unions levy fines for inexcusable absences, or even deprive a member of the card which enables him to work at his trade with other unionists. Usually such measures are effective, though a few instances have been found where the fines are so frequent that they have become a regular source of revenue, and in consequence the weekly dues have been reduced in amount. Occasionally, difficulties result from revolts of the minority, who, disgruntled perhaps because a pet scheme has been rejected, revenge themselves by bitter denunciation, by filibustering, or by constantly stirring up factional feeling which may ultimately disrupt the union. The thoughtful and conservative allow themselves to be overawed into declaring unwise strikes by the taunt of cowardice from the "red-hot fire-eaters." Windy orators waste the time of the meetings in rambling, pointless discussion.

The mass-meeting is a clumsy mechanism to use for rendering judicial decisions and for the transaction of executive business, and matters are continually arising which demand immediate consideration during the period between the regular meetings. The general meeting has been very reluctant to delegate any of its powers; but of necessity various boards and committees have gradually been created. Many of these committees are appointed for a particular purpose, and are discharged when that purpose has been attained. Nevertheless, certain standing committees have also emerged, the most important of which is the executive committee. This board exercises a wide though varying number of specially delegated powers, but any of its deci-

sions may be overruled by the general meeting.<sup>1</sup> The executive board appears at a comparatively late date in the history of the local union. Such a board existed in the Philadelphia Typographical Society in 1802 and in the New York society of the same trade as early as 1809; it was not used, however, by the Washington association of printers in 1821,<sup>2</sup> or by the Baltimore society in 1833.<sup>3</sup> Since about 1840 it has become a useful feature of government in local unions of printers; in other trades it did not appear until a much later date. The local unions of such early organized trades as hat making, stone cutting, and bricklaying, for example, had no executive boards as late as the decade between 1880 and 1890. Some international unions have adopted rules requiring the subordinate branches to create such executive committees in order to prevent delay in the transaction of international business during the frequently long interval between the meetings of the local union.<sup>4</sup> At the present day most local societies have such executive boards, though not even yet are they to be found in some trades.

Another important committee of the local union is the judiciary or grievance committee, which considers charges. Sometimes a special committee is created when a member is brought to trial. Occasionally the executive board is vested with this judicial authority, but more frequently a special standing committee exists for this purpose. Another standing committee is the membership committee; another is

<sup>1</sup> In the earliest extant constitution of an American local trade union, that of the Philadelphia Typographical Society for 1802, power to transact all business not especially delegated to the general meeting was vested in a board of directors, which admitted and expelled members, paid benefits, and adopted regulations of work. Its decisions were reported to the general meeting, but could not be reversed by that body. The structure of the Philadelphia Typographical Society was exceptional. The constitution of this association is reprinted in the *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor*, no. 61, November, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Constitution of the Columbia Typographical Society of Washington, 1821.

<sup>3</sup> Constitution of the New York Typographical Society, 1833.

<sup>4</sup> The Cigar Makers made provision for the establishment of such boards as early as 1879 (Constitution, adopted 1879, art. xvi, sec. 1, in *Cigar Makers' Official Journal*, September, 1879, p. 3).

the finance committee, one of whose most important duties is to audit the accounts of the officers having charge of the funds.

The officers of the local union are commonly a president, who is chairman at meetings of the society, a vice-president, a recording secretary, a treasurer, a corresponding secretary, and frequently also a financial secretary who keeps account of receipts and expenditures. Sometimes the recording secretary acts as corresponding or as financial secretary; sometimes the officers of corresponding secretary and financial secretary are combined. Usually the local officers are unpaid, or are paid a nominal sum. They work at their trade, and perform their official duties during spare time. The duties of the local and financial secretary are exceptionally onerous in unions which, like the Cigar Makers, maintain a variety of benefits, and many of the larger local unions in such trades pay him a salary. The paid financial secretary devotes his entire time to the union, and receives usually the rate of wages prevailing in the trade. Not only does he keep the financial accounts, but he also performs in many instances the work of corresponding secretary, recording secretary, and treasurer.

The other paid official in the local union is the walking delegate or, as the trade unionists prefer to call him, the business agent. The business agent adjusts disputes between employers and their workmen, and thus replaces the committees of the shops and local union which would otherwise perform this service. The policy of bargaining with employers through unpaid officials or committees has certain disadvantages. In the first place, the employers frequently look upon the members of delegations from their workmen as agitators seeking to stir up trouble, and sometimes discharge them at the earliest opportunity. Moreover, efficient bargaining with an employer requires shrewdness, diplomacy, and considerable knowledge of cost and methods of production in competing factories. Gradually the salaried official attains knowledge concerning conditions in the industry and also some skill in bargaining. At the same time he is not

restrained in upholding the rights of his fellow-workmen by the fear of being discharged by the employer.

The business agent performs also duties which in other unions are left to the shop steward. Like that official, he collects dues, detects and calls attention to violations of trade agreements, and prevents the employment of non-society journeymen in union shops. Another of his functions is to serve as the head of an employment agency. Employers who need additional journeymen apply to him in the early morning hours before he starts on his round of visits from one establishment to another, and he dispatches such men as are out of work to fill the vacant places. As an organizer he seeks to persuade workmen to join the union. Frequently he acts as financial secretary. Sometimes when the union pays sick benefits he visits sick members to determine their eligibility to receive such benefits.<sup>5</sup>

The business agent is a very recent development in the government of the local trade union. The first walking delegate is reported to have been James Lynch, who was elected to the office by the carpenters' union of New York in 1883;<sup>6</sup> but walking delegates were also maintained by the Bricklayers of New York in 1883 and perhaps earlier.<sup>7</sup> Probably a large majority of the local unions do not employ business agents. Of twelve hundred and twenty-five local unions in Massachusetts from whom information was obtained in a recent investigation not more than thirty-eight per cent were represented by business agents.<sup>8</sup> Only local unions with a large membership can afford the expense of maintaining a business agent. Local unions of the building trades constitute perhaps more than half of the societies maintaining business agents; certainly such was found by the above inquiry to be the condition in Massachusetts. The business agent is declared to be more needed in the building trades

<sup>5</sup> A good description of the work of the walking delegate is contained in *The Tailor*, April, 1893, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Century Magazine*, December, 1903, p. 298.

<sup>7</sup> *Proceedings*, 1883.

<sup>8</sup> *Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the Statistics of Labor for 1908 of the Bureau of Statistics of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*



than in others because the incessant shifting of the workers from one building to another renders the maintenance of any kind of shop organization difficult. Members of the building trades unions are required by their organizations to elect a shop steward as soon as they are put to work on the construction of a building, but often such a group of workers are too little acquainted with one another to know who is the best man for the position. In addition to this, the steward who is selected has scarcely time enough to familiarize himself with his duties or to develop a sense of responsibility for performing them.

Hated by employers, envied and often criticised by his fellow-unionists, the position of the business agent is not always a pleasant one. Such is the common complaint of the business agents with whom the writer has talked. "I found the position anything but pleasant," said James Lynch, the early walking delegate mentioned above. "I was at once plunged into continual war. My presence on a job was an irritation to the employer as well as to the non-union men and not infrequently some of the union men envied me, little knowing the sorrows of my lot." Usually the business agent receives the same salary as he would if he were working at his trade. His expenses are increased, however, because of his office. At the same time he is vested with great authority and is subjected to dangerous temptation. From accepting bribes to levying blackmail was the short step which put prominent business agents of the New York building trades unions in Sing Sing Prison a few years ago. The union is frequently not blameless. The statement has been made repeatedly, though with what truth it is difficult to say, that certain unions have condoned the blackmailing of employers by shrewd and energetic agents who have been successful in securing good wages for the trade.

One serious mistake has been to vest the business agent with power to call a strike, for this power has been the club which he has used to extort money from the employers. The policy of permitting the business agent to declare a strike has prevailed particularly in the building trades. In those trades

he may order the workmen to leave the building immediately whenever he finds a non-union man at work or discovers some other violation of the agreement by the employer. As a consequence, the most flagrant cases of dishonesty among business agents have occurred in the building trades. These trades vest control over strikes in such officials for the same reason that they permit the men on a building to strike without the consent of the local union, namely, because the frequent shifting of the men from one building to another necessitates prompt action.

In all the trades except the building trades the immediate control of the business agent over strikes and other matters is very much restricted. Very seldom has he power to call a strike. To be sure, a suggestion from him may lead the men in an industrial establishment to quit work; but, as has been pointed out, unauthorized shop strikes are rapidly disappearing. Over the vote on strikes at meetings of the local unions he can exert only a limited influence. Almost invariably the vote is a secret one, in order that the fear of denunciation by others may not cause the timid to vote against their convictions. Moreover, the local union is referring proposed strikes to the international union with increasing frequency, and the international union does not even accept the report of the business agent, but sends its own representative to investigate the cause of the dispute. Because of his official position and because of his intimate knowledge of conditions about which the other members are only vaguely informed, the business agent, in spite of all restrictions on his power, naturally exercises great influence at meetings of the local unions. Indeed, some of the more able among them are said to hold their unions in the hollow of their hands. But the domination of leaders is seemingly inevitable in trade unions as in other organizations. As far as rules can provide, the powers of the business agent are carefully restricted by requiring him to submit all questions to the local executive board or to meetings of the local union.

Even in the building trades the influence of the business agent over strikes is declining. To be sure, after the spec-

tacular trials of 1904 and 1905 the New York local unions, even those whose business agents had been sent to prison for blackmailing, continued to permit such officials to call men off a building. Nevertheless, the Building Trades Alliance adopted at that time a rule to the effect that no business agent could declare a strike involving other trades besides his own. Power to declare strikes involving several of the building trades was not vested as formerly in the joint board of walking delegates, but in a board or council especially created for the purpose on which each of the unions belonging to the alliance was represented. At the same time, by an agreement between the Building Trades Employers' Association and their workmen, no strike can be declared by joint action of all local unions, by a single local union, by a business agent, or by a group of men on a building until the matter in dispute has been referred to an arbitration board consisting of two delegates from each division of the Employers' Association and two from each local union that is a party to the agreement. A business agent, therefore, could order to quit work only members of his own trade employed by an independent contractor not a party to the above agreement.

Grave defects in the government of the local union have resulted from the administrative inexperience of its members. Students of trade-union development must not forget that the early unionist was ordinarily without parliamentary or executive experience. Unless he had dabbled in ward or county politics, or had served as delegate to some party convention, he had little practical or even theoretical knowledge of the machinery of government. If one half of the reminiscences to be heard or read are true, conditions in the newly organized local union were disheartening.

Such executive inexperience has been clearly apparent, for example, in the methods of financial administration. Treasurers and financial secretaries frequently defalcated. In the early trade journals there appeared such notices as the following: "Be it known that \_\_\_\_\_, late financial secretary of Union No. — has absconded and taken

\$9 and over of assessments and dues belonging to the union. Other unions look out for him, for he is a 'beat' and a very smooth talker."<sup>9</sup> Often the funds so misappropriated were small in amount, frequently not exceeding thirty or forty dollars. One cause of such delinquency has been the lack of care or discrimination exercised in the selection of men to fill financial positions. Incompetents, "good fellows," and total strangers of whose past nothing was known have been elected. For example, on one occasion a local union chose as financial secretary a man who had been in town only a few weeks prior to his election. His record was by no means clear, the union of the locality he had just left having suspended him for non-payment of dues, but on application to the local union in his new place of residence he was reinstated on his promise to pay the arrearage. When the office of financial secretary fell vacant, he was elected to the position. A few weeks later he absconded with about forty dollars of the society's funds.<sup>10</sup>

Another important cause of defalcation has been the neglect of the local union to take proper precautions for the protection of the funds. Frequently the financial officers have not been required to give bond. The financial secretary has been allowed to accumulate dues in his own hands without turning them over to the treasurer. Many societies have failed to elect trustees, or such trustees, when elected, have neglected to require that the financial officers turn over all funds above a certain amount for deposit or investment. Some local unions have even failed to elect auditing committees to examine the books and accounts of the treasurer and financial secretary and to report as to their correctness. The financial officers have been permitted to report to the general meeting, where garbled and false statements could be made without fear of detection. On the other hand, since these societies were unincorporated, and since in many cases the officers were paid no salaries, legal prosecution has been difficult. Moreover, with mis-

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<sup>9</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, March, 1876, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., March, 1881, p. 5.

placed sympathy, such societies have frequently not attempted to bring the absconding officers to trial. Sometimes they have even allowed those who have promised to refund the amount embezzled to maintain their membership in the union. Gradually, however, the older local unions have evolved better methods of administering financial and other business. Some international organizations have adopted rigid rules for the guidance of local unions, and a few have created special international officers who travel from one society to another to see that these rules are enforced.

In the district unions the representative assembly performs the functions of the general mass-meeting in the local society. Equal representation on the district council for each society has sometimes been secured by the small local unions, which are watchful to prevent any encroachment upon their independence. The more centralized district unions, which hold the welfare of the majority paramount to the preservation of local authority, ordinarily permit representation in proportion to membership. The district council transacts all important business, though in some trades the members, wishing to retain control over the adoption of amendments to the constitution and of regulations governing the conditions of employment, require that the decision of the council on such matters be submitted to a referendum vote. The officers of the district union are commonly a president, a vice-president, a recording secretary, a financial secretary, a treasurer, and trustees. Sometimes a single official known as the secretary-treasurer performs the duties of the recording secretary, financial secretary, and treasurer. Frequently there is also an executive board, which transacts emergency business between the meetings of the district council. Often the district union maintains a business agent, since many small local societies lack sufficient money to maintain one of their own. Except the business agent, and occasionally the secretary-treasurer, the officers serve without pay or receive only a nominal sum. Quite commonly the business agent is elected by popular

vote of the members of all the local societies, though sometimes the district council selects the business agent from a list of candidates submitted by the local unions. Almost invariably the other officers and the members of the executive board are selected by the district council, and as a rule only the delegates comprising the council are eligible to these positions.

The form of government and the problems of government of the district unions are very similar to those of the national and international associations. In both, for example, there is variety of opinion and practice concerning the use of the initiative and referendum. In both there is the struggle between those who favor equal and those who favor proportional representation. The problems of government of the national union are made more complicated, however, by its wider territorial jurisdiction. Thus, while the district council, which can meet weekly if necessary, transacts nearly all business of the district union, the national trade-union convention, which can be convoked, because of distance, only for a few days each year, transacts but a small part of the national business, matters arising during the long period between its sessions being considered by the officers or the executive board or referred to a general vote of the members. No detailed statement concerning the government of the district union will be made in these pages, since to do so would only be to repeat the discussion of problems which must be considered in the chapters devoted to the government of the national unions.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

The convention of delegates from the several local societies is perhaps the most important part of the governmental machinery of national and international trade unions. In its general features it does not differ widely from the assemblies or conventions held regularly by church, fraternal, and other organizations. The delegates assemble at the time and place fixed by the preceding convention. They meet in some convenient public hall, are welcomed by municipal executives and local trade-union leaders, continue in session five days or a week, perhaps a little longer, and then adjourn for a year, two years, or more.

The trade-union convention exercises executive and judicial as well as legislative functions, thus violating the political principles of those who hold that each of these three functions of government should be vested in a separate organ of government. In exercising its legislative power it has equal authority to pass every kind of rule. In fact, the trade unions ordinarily make no distinction between constitutional and statutory laws. All kinds of rules are adopted in exactly the same manner. At one moment, therefore, the convention may be remodeling the entire machinery of government, or transferring important functions from the local unions to the international union; at another, it may be passing an unimportant rule to the effect that the union label shall be printed on red instead of blue paper. Exceptions are the International Typographical Union and the Shingle Weavers' Union. In imitation of the American political system, both require that "constitutional" amendments, which have been adopted by convention, must be submitted to popular vote, whereas the so-

called "by-laws" and "general laws" require no such ratification, and go immediately into effect upon enactment by the representative assembly.

Acting as a judicial tribunal, the convention considers grievances brought by national officers, local unions, or members, and these grievances may involve violations of the rules of local unions as well as of those of the national union. In consequence, while some of the suits laid before convention are important, others are trivial. At one time the convention may be suspending a local union for serious violation of the rules; at another time it may be sustaining a subordinate union in imposing a fine of one or two dollars on a member for some petty misdemeanor. An exception must be made of five international unions which do not permit members who have appealed to the international officers or international executive board from a decision of their local union to appeal as a final resort to convention.<sup>1</sup> Save in these few organizations, the time of the convention has been largely wasted by the consideration of unimportant appeals.

The levy of taxes, the appropriation of revenue, the declaration of industrial war, and the ratification of agreements are the functions exercised by the trade-union convention. That assembly fixes the amount of dues and assessments; it controls disbursements; it orders strikes against employers. The convention has the final power in making agreements. Even when collective bargaining is conducted by the local societies, the national union frequently fixes rules of apprenticeship, hours of labor, and other conditions of employment which the subordinate lodges must demand from employers. When the terms of the labor contract are determined by a national or district joint conference between employers and employees, the national or district convention practically always meets immediately before the joint conference and outlines the terms which its representatives are

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<sup>1</sup> These are the following unions: Hotel and Restaurant Employees, Paper Box Makers, Paper Makers and Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, Pavers, and Railway Conductors.



to demand.<sup>2</sup> The convention performs many other functions. It elects officers, and audits their accounts. Through its committees it performs at times a wide variety of detailed administrative duties which in a political government are usually delegated to the executive officers.

The convention of the larger trade unions has the fault of the representative assembly in many political governments and voluntary societies, namely, that it is too large to transact business very efficiently. Sometimes several hundred delegates are present at its sessions. Careful formulation of policies or sifting of evidence in judicial cases by such a large body is impracticable. Therefore the usual practice of creating committees to perform functions has been followed. In consequence, much of the time of conventions is spent in accepting or rejecting the proposals of committees.

The trade-union conventions almost outrival the state and federal legislatures of the United States in the bewildering number and variety of their committees. The committee on constitution, or the committee on laws, as it is variously termed, is perhaps the most important. To it all amendments to the rules are submitted. In some unions this committee reports concerning all amendments submitted to it merely with favorable or unfavorable comment. In other unions it follows the usual legislative practice of pigeonholing the amendments which it deems undesirable, and presents, perhaps in a reconstructed form, those which it desires the convention to pass. Besides this general legislative committee, special ones are created to consider or draft rules regulating strikes, sick benefits, the union label, or apprenticeship. A judiciary committee, sometimes known as the committee on appeals or grievances, considers appeals from judicial decisions of national officers and local unions. One committee sanctions strikes. Another audits the financial accounts of officers. There are committees to

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<sup>2</sup> For some years the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers held two separate conventions, one to regulate the internal affairs of the organization, the other to draw up the scale of wages to be demanded by employees. Since 1886, however, the two conventions have been merged.

consider conditions of employment, wages, hours of labor, relations with other unions, printing, and the trade journal.

Frequently the duties of these numerous committees are not carefully coordinated. Such lack of coordination is particularly apparent in the legislative work of convention. Amendments to the rules are drafted and submitted to the representative assembly not only by the general committee on constitution, and by committees especially created to frame legislation on some particular matter, but also by committees formed for wholly different purposes. For example, the amendments to the rules recommended by the president or secretary-treasurer in their reports to convention may be drafted in legal form by the committee on officers' reports. Amendments to the rules governing the use and administration of the label may be proposed by the committee appointed to devise means for advertising and promoting the demand for the label. Amendments to the rules relating to the payment of strike benefits may be suggested by the committee which considers petitions to declare strikes. The convention does not ordinarily refer all these proposed amendments to a single coordinating committee. The result is confusion and conflict. On one occasion in the early days of the Iron Molders' Union, two committees submitted to the convention resolutions to the effect that a certain measure should be referred to a vote of the members. One resolution provided that the measure should be adopted if three fourths of the members voted in its favor, and the other if three fourths of the local unions so voted.<sup>3</sup> The convention, failing to observe the conflict, adopted both resolutions. The Iron Molders' Union and some others of the older organizations have remedied this fault by submitting all amendments, by whomsoever proposed, to one committee.

The governmental efficiency of the trade-union convention is limited because it can be convoked so infrequently and can remain in session such a very short time. None of the unions hold conventions oftener than once a year, and many

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<sup>3</sup> Proceedings, 1874.

of them less frequently. The length of each session has been more and more protracted as organizations have grown in the size and number of their activities. For example, the convention of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers lasted for three days in 1876 and for seventeen days in 1902; that of the Cigar Makers lasted for five days in 1866 and for eighteen days in 1896. Nevertheless, in fifty-six associations from which information was obtained the average length of the convention was seven days; in only twelve of these was the convention in session for more than ten days. The most protracted sessions are those of the Iron Molders, whose delegates continued to meet together in 1902 for twenty days. Certainly a week or even two weeks seems a very short time in which to adopt needed legislation, clear the docket of judicial cases, elect officers, audit accounts, levy dues, appropriate funds, declare strikes, and transact the numerous other items of business which have been accumulating during the year or more since last convention.

Short as is the period allotted for the meetings of convention, much time is lost in waiting for committees to report. Little is ever accomplished on the first day, since the convention can take no action until the credential committee determines the right of the delegates to take part in its deliberations. After listening to the addresses of welcome, a recess is taken until the credential committee is ready to report. After the convention has organized, after committees have been appointed or elected and work has been assigned to each, the delegates mark time again until these committees are prepared to make their reports. During this interval the societies in the city where the convention is being held seize the opportunity to entertain the delegates, whose time is spent in part at least in attendance at picnics and entertainments. In consequence, most of the business is rushed through during the latter part of the session. During these last few days national officers must be elected and the place for next convention chosen. If the contest is a close one, much time is consumed in electioneering and wire-

pulling, and frequently, if there are several candidates, in taking a number of ballots. Sometimes only a couple of days remain in which to adopt amendments to the rules and formulate trade policies.

Some eleven organizations save time by having the credential committee meet a day or two before the delegates assemble, so that it can present its report immediately on the opening of convention. In four associations this committee also audits the financial accounts of the officers, and in two others it considers amendments and resolutions. Some sixteen other national unions, only two of which are included in the eleven noted above, provide that the committee on amendments and resolutions shall meet from three to ten days before the representative assembly convenes. This committee compiles carefully all amendments and resolutions referred to it by delegates and local unions. Sometimes this committee prints its report on the amendments and resolutions referred to it by the delegates and local unions, and places a copy in the hands of each delegate during the first days of the session. In at least two associations this committee also considers appeals and grievances, and in four associations it audits the financial accounts of the officers. As a result the convention has much greater opportunity to deliberate on matters brought before it, and is less apt to accept hurriedly the opinion of committees.

In fixing the basis of representation in convention, the same opposition has existed between the large and the small local societies as existed at the time of the founding of the American Commonwealth between the large and the small States. The members of the large local unions have demanded that representation should be proportional to membership. They point out the unfairness of allowing a society of twenty-five and one of a thousand members to have the same voting power in convention. They hold that the majority, not a small minority, should dominate.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the small local unions have demanded that each society have equal representation. They fear that if

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<sup>4</sup> 'Cigar Makers' Official Journal, March, 1880.

representation were proportional to membership, two or three large societies would dictate policies to all the rest. Such a condition is not indeed a baseless fear, conjured up by the small unions.<sup>5</sup> Instances of it may be found whenever the system of representation according to membership has prevailed. In one national union the delegates from the large New York society constituted such a considerable proportion of the convention that frequently their vote would cause the rejection or passage of a measure. Among other things, the New York society wished to capture the presidency of the national union for one of its members, and in exchange for help in passing measures desired by other local unions it secured very easily enough votes to elect its candidate.

The trade unionists have not possessed sufficient funds to imitate the founders of the United States Government, and to create as a compromise two bodies, one in which each local union should be represented equally, and the other in which representation should be according to membership. In all the national unions there is only one representative assembly, but the system of representation in the assembly varies widely. During the early days of the older organizations, when they were still decentralized, the local societies were given equal representation irrespective of their size. The Bricklayers and the Printers, whose international unions were very loose confederations, continued this policy for some years, the Bricklayers from 1867 to 1890 and the Printers from 1852 to 1869. At the present time, of the twelve organizations which permit equal representation of local societies, six are young, decentralized associations.<sup>5</sup> Of the six older organizations, five are railway unions, and in the railway unions the subordinate lodges are of a more or less uniform size, since they do not embrace the workers in a certain locality, but those employed on a particular unit of the railway system.

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<sup>5</sup> The twelve organizations are as follows: Ceramic, Mosaic and Encaustic Tile Layers and Helpers, Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Locomotive Engineers, Maintenance-of-Way Employees, Railroad Trainmen, Railway Conductors, Railway Employees, Slate and Tile Roofers, Steel and Copper Plate Printers, Switchmen, Table Knife Grinders, and Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers.

One hundred and eleven other national or international unions make some attempt to apportion the number of delegates according to membership. To protect the small societies from domination by the large ones, however, twenty-five of these associations, most of them rather decentralized, give representation according to membership to local unions having less than a certain number of members, but limit all larger local unions to the same fixed maximum number of delegates.<sup>6</sup> Thus, since the abolishment of the system of equal representation in 1869, the International Typographical Union has permitted local unions with less than a thousand members to have from one to three delegates, according to size, but has limited all having a thousand and over to four delegates.<sup>7</sup> Seventeen other associations, though fixing no maximum limit to the number of delegates which a society may send to convention, favor the smaller local unions by increasing the basis of representation as the number of delegates from a society increases. The Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders thus allows one delegate for the first ten members, a second for the next twenty, and one additional for each fifty members or major part thereof.

In fifty-six of the one hundred and eleven national unions representation is proportional to membership. The number of members which each delegate may represent remains constant, no matter how large the local society. The small local unions have still the advantage, since each society is allowed one delegate even though it have much fewer members than the maximum number which a single delegate may represent. Thus if the basis of representation

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<sup>6</sup> These are the following unions: Bakers and Confectioners, Bill Posters and Billers, Bricklayers and Masons, Brushmakers, Carpenters and Joiners, Garment Workers, Glove Workers, Granite Cutters, Heat, Frost and Asbestos Workers, Hod Carriers and Building Laborers, Hotel and Restaurant Employees, Horseshoers, Leather Workers on Horse Goods, Painters, Decorators and Paper Hangers, Post Office Clerks, Printers, Printing Pressmen and Assistants, Quarry Workers, Retail Clerks, Stationary Firemen, Tailors, Watch Case Engravers, Wire Weavers, Wood Carvers, and Woodsmen and Saw Mill Workers.

<sup>7</sup> Proceedings, 1869.

is one for each hundred members, the society with only ten members, as well as the one with ninety-nine members, may send one delegate to convention. The tiny local unions have very little advantage in national unions where the basis of representation is small,—only one delegate for each thirty, twenty, or even five members. But in thirty-five of the fifty-six, the basis of representation is one for each fifty or one hundred, and in the remaining fourteen, one for each two hundred, three hundred, or even five hundred. To protect the larger local unions, three of the above national unions require a branch having less than twenty-five members to combine with another to send a delegate, provided the two have a combined membership of twenty-five or more. Three others deny representation to small local unions of less than twenty or twenty-five members.<sup>8</sup>

Unless, however, the expenses of the delegates are borne by the national union, the large branches, under a system of either equal or proportional representation, dominate the convention for the reason that the small unions cannot afford the expense of sending delegates. The cost of sending a representative is naturally a heavier burden to a small union than to a large one. If the expenses of a delegate were, for example, fifty dollars for a branch of ten members,

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<sup>8</sup> The following table shows in succinct form the various systems of representation in 123 national unions:—

	Number of Unions
Equal representation .....	12
Representation proportional to membership.....	56
Maximum limit to number of delegates representing one society, proportional representation for societies with less than the maximum number.....	25
Basis of representation increases as the delegates of a society increase in number.....	18
Basis of representation decreases as the delegates of a society increase in number.....	4
Basis of representation increases and then decreases as the delegates of a society increase in number.....	2
Each local union sends one delegate who casts a number of votes proportional to the number of members he represents .....	6
Total .....	123

the cost would be five dollars apiece. For a branch of one hundred members it would be fifty cents apiece. When, therefore, the local unions of a trade defray this expense, only a small proportion of them are usually represented.<sup>9</sup> Thus, of the one hundred and seventy local unions belonging to the International Union of Plumbers in 1898, only twenty were represented at the convention.<sup>10</sup> At the convention of the Carpenters in 1890 only one hundred and ninety-nine delegates, representing one hundred and fifty-seven branches, were present, though the general secretary reported that the national organization embraced seven hundred and four local unions.<sup>11</sup>

Sometimes a local union which cannot afford the expense of sending a representative to the convention requests the delegate from a nearby local union to introduce the resolution it desires to have adopted, and to vote for it by proxy. The system of representation by proxy has been tried by all the older national unions, and is expressly permitted by the rules of thirteen out of one hundred and twenty-five organizations. The danger of proxy representation is that a single delegate, or a few delegates, to whom a large number of proxies have been entrusted may hold the balance of power in convention. When the vote is fairly close, these proxies may decide the fate of a measure. In exchange for these votes on certain questions, the proxy-holders may acquire control over a sufficient number of the votes of other delegates to secure the election of their candidate or the adoption of a particular resolution in which they are interested. For this reason four of the associations which permit proxies limit strictly the number which any one delegate may hold, and two give this privilege only to very small local unions. Moreover, a large number of unions forbid entirely the system of representation by proxy.

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<sup>9</sup> At least three associations consider that each local union, no matter how small, should shoulder the financial burden of sending at least one delegate, and they impose a fine on the subordinate union that fails to do so.

<sup>10</sup> Proceedings, 1898

<sup>11</sup> Proceedings, 1890, pp. 6, 15.



Six national unions reduce the cost of representation in convention by providing that all local unions, irrespective of size, may send one delegate, each of whom casts, however, a number of votes<sup>12</sup> proportional to the membership he represents. Thirty-nine other associations permit the local societies to send less than the number of delegates to which the local society is entitled; the number may be limited to one, who in seven unions casts either fewer than, or, more usually, as many votes as the whole number of representatives to which the society is entitled. The same objection may be made against this system, however, as against that of proxy representation, namely, that it permits the concentration of too great a voting power. When in 1880 the Cigar Makers adopted a rule that a single delegate could cast all of the votes of his society, the largest local union, No. 144 of New York, with thirty-six hundred members, sent to the next convention one delegate privileged to cast thirty-six votes, or thirty-two per cent of the total number of votes in the convention. Five of the above thirty-nine associations, therefore, limit the number of votes which one delegate may cast, and thus each local society must send two or more delegates if it wishes to cast its full quota of votes.

Thirteen national unions pay the railway fare of their delegates in order to place at an equal advantage the branches near and those at a distance from the place of meeting, as well as to aid the small local unions which cannot otherwise afford to send representatives. Another national association pays the railway fare of delegates for each mile over five hundred; the other expenses are borne by the subordinate unions. Even with such financial assistance from the federal organization, many branches fail to be represented. Seventeen national or international unions have secured adequate representation to the small branches by paying the railway fare and hotel bills and other incidental expenses from the central treasury. In ninety-two

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<sup>12</sup> These are the following unions: Barbers, Chain Makers, Pilots, Saw Smiths, Travellers' Goods and Leather Novelty Workers, and Upholsterers.

organizations, or seventy-three per cent of those studied, the expense is borne wholly by the local unions.

When the expense is borne by the national union, the large local union is taxed in order that the small one may be represented. The local union of one hundred or one hundred and fifty members which formerly paid fifty cents per capita to send its own delegate to convention now pays sixty-five or seventy-five cents per capita to give representation to the branch of ten or fifteen members. The amount which the national organization pays in order that the small branch may send a delegate to convention may easily be larger than the amount which the small branch contributes during the year to the national union. To make the financial burden seem still more unfair to the large local unions, the small unions predominate when the expenses of the delegates are paid by the national organization, whereas the large local unions hold the balance of power when each subordinate society bears the expense. The provision that small subordinate unions with less than a certain membership are not entitled to representation eliminates some of the small local unions, but only four out of some seventeen national unions which pay the expenses of the delegates from the central treasury have this rule, and the number of members required for representation in convention—twenty-five in three organizations and twenty in a third—is too low to eliminate many of the small local unions.

Another objection to the payment of the expenses of delegates by the national union is that it results in making the convention too large for governmental efficiency. The number of subordinate lodges has been increasing in all organized trades, not only because of growth in membership, but also in consequence of the tendency to split up the original local unions into smaller units according to sex, branch of the trade, or nationality. In all organizations, therefore, the size of the convention has tended to grow larger, and the growth has been abnormal in those associations which meet the expenses of the delegates from the central treasury. At the convention of Cigar Makers held in 1877, soon after

the industrial depression, seven delegates were present, in 1883 there were eighty-five, and at the convention of 1896, two hundred and forty-five. In some national organizations which do not pay the expenses of delegates the convention is restricted to a fairly convenient size only by the failure of many local unions to send representatives. Thus, at the convention of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in 1890, only one hundred and fifty-seven out of seven hundred and four local unions were represented by one hundred and ninety-nine delegates. Had each of the seven hundred and four subordinate lodges sent delegates, the convention would have been too large to transact its business effectively.<sup>13</sup> Over seventeen hundred local unions now owe allegiance to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, and if each of these should send one or more delegates to the convention, the representative assembly would be a mass-meeting too bulky to be handled in any efficient manner. The system of paying the expense of delegates from the national treasury is, therefore, not popular with unions, like those of the building trades, which have a large number of comparatively small local unions.

One plan to reduce the size of convention and yet allow representation proportional to membership is to group the local societies into districts and to require that those within each district join together in electing delegates. The basis of representation of the district in the national body could be made fairly large, say one delegate for each three hundred, five hundred, or even one thousand members. The size of the national convention would be reduced, and the basis of representation would be more equitable. The cost of holding convention would be less, and so more frequent or more protracted sessions could be held. This plan has been proposed repeatedly in American trade unions. A few of the older organizations have tried it, but they have always failed.<sup>14</sup> The failure to establish this system may perhaps

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<sup>13</sup> Proceedings, 1890.

<sup>14</sup> The Iron Molders, who adopted the system in 1886, abolished it two years later (Constitution, 1886). For another instance, see *Machinists and Blacksmiths' Journal*, October, 1872, p. 805.

be ascribed to the decentralized character of American trade unionism. The local union, jealous of any infringement of its political prerogatives, refuses to lose its identity in the national council by any form of district representation.

As the activities of the national union increase, the convention becomes more and more ineffective as a method of transacting business, and its power declines rapidly. This decline may be marked off into three very roughly defined stages. During the first of these, the representative assembly has been the chief, in fact, almost the sole organ of government. This stage occurs during the early days of an organization, when it is still loosely decentralized, and it exists in some of the newer associations even today. The functions of a loose confederation of local unions are primarily legislative and judicial, and such functions the convention performs quite easily. The amount of executive work is very limited, and the few unpaid officials are elected from among the delegates at the convention primarily for the performance of certain services at its sessions, and they have few or no other duties.

The second stage appears with the growth of the activities of the central organization, and is marked by the creation of certain paid and unpaid officials and boards of management which levy assessments, sanction the declaration of strikes, perform innumerable detailed executive duties, make judicial decisions, and sometimes exercise a limited legislative power during the period between conventions. The representative assembly remains, however, the highest authority in the organization. It usually continues to elect officers, to remove them for misdemeanors or neglect of duty, and to audit their accounts. It overrides their judicial decisions, and declares strikes which they have refused to sanction. It is true that only a very few of those who are discontented with decisions of the national officers or national executive board appeal to the convention; in consequence, its judicial work becomes very small, and it has little control over the strike policy of the organization. At the same time, the influence of the paid officers over the convention grows

rapidly. Giving their entire time to the work of the union, these officials gain an intimate knowledge of the conditions of the trade and the internal affairs of the association, and the delegates must rely greatly on their judgment. Indeed, an increasingly larger part of the time of convention is devoted to the ratification or rejection of the legislative and executive program outlined by the officers in their reports to the representative assembly.

In the third stage, government by popular vote is substituted for government by the representatives. This stage is difficult to mark off chronologically, since some organizations have used the so-called initiative and referendum from the beginning of their history. Moreover, the extent to which the representative assembly has been replaced by the referendum varies in different associations. Some unions have abolished conventions, or convoke them at infrequent intervals. Another group continues to hold conventions regularly, but submits all enactments of that body to the vote of the members. A few unions require that appeals from judicial and strike decisions of the officers be made no longer to the convention but to the general membership. In others the only change has been that officers are now elected by vote of the members, and not as formerly by convention. In another fairly large group the referendum is used merely to adopt emergency legislation between the sessions of the representative assembly, and since the representatives are at liberty to revoke or amend such emergency legislation, the power of convention is in no wise limited. Finally, there remains a considerable number of unions which refer no questions of any kind to popular vote, and in these the convention continues to be the primary organ of government.

## CHAPTER X

### THE OFFICERS OF THE NATIONAL UNION

Certain governmental machinery is needed to do administrative work which a representative body like a convention cannot perform. From the beginning of national trade unionism some one has been required to collect revenue, and a corresponding secretary has also been needed to serve as the agent of communication between the local societies and the national union. Some one has had to do a policeman's work in enforcing the observance of the national rules. As the activities of the federal organization have developed, an executive has been created to manage the complicated administrative machinery.

Certain machinery of government is also required to make decisions on matters the consideration of which cannot be postponed until the next convention. One question which must nearly always be decided immediately is the desirability of a strike. Sometimes, indeed, the postponement of a strike may preclude the necessity of its declaration, since greater deliberation may show the lack of necessity for it, or further conference with employers may secure its peaceful adjustment. When the declaration of a strike seems inevitable, the delay which furnishes the employer an opportunity for preparation may steal away most of its effectiveness. Industrial conditions change rapidly. At the moment, all may be propitious; if action is postponed until the next convention, the opportunity will be lost.

Moreover, the strike, the success of which seemed reasonably certain at the time when it was declared by the convention, may become a hopeless venture after the adjournment of that body because of an unexpected change in industrial conditions. For this reason, trade-union leaders dislike exceedingly to be bound by rigid and specific instruc-

tions of the representative assembly. We find the secretary of the Miners' Association of Western Pennsylvania complaining in 1880 about the "iron jacket of orders from convention." The previous convention had ordered a strike of miners in all collieries located along the railroads leading into Pittsburg; but the miners at the collieries located beside the rivers, by which coal was sent to Pittsburg, remained at work, and during the first week of the struggle the coal which they mined was sent to fill the contracts of the operators of the railway mines. From the beginning, therefore, the ultimate failure of the strike was clearly apparent. The secretary felt himself bound by the specific orders of convention, however, and feared by disobedience to bring down upon himself the wrath of the organization and the accusation that he had been bribed by the operators. The custom of restricting the officers to the mechanical duties of obeying orders from conventions he declared to be absurd. The opinion of one who is paid to study the markets and, if necessary, visit the places where coal is sold should have due weight, he thought, and much should be left to his discretion.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the trade union is a belligerent association nearly always engaged in a guerilla struggle with employers, sometimes in wide-spreading general combat; and for success in war, industrial as well as military, prompt decisions and a flexible policy are requisite. The very life of the organization may be the penalty of long delay and rigid rules. Therefore, between conventions some governmental body must have authority to declare strikes, to conduct them, to call them off, or to levy special assessments when the funds are exhausted by a long struggle.

During the period between conventions some judicial authority must be created to interpret the meaning of vague or conflicting rules, otherwise the carrying out of the activities of the organization may be abruptly halted. Some judicial authority must also be created to discipline local unions and individual members and to hear appeals of mem-

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<sup>1</sup> National Labor Tribune, February 21, 1880, p. 1.

bers from local unions. If no such authority exists, the guilty may delay their punishment and the acquittal of the innocent may be postponed.

Usually the representative assembly has jealously endeavored to retain exclusive legislative power, but its efforts have nearly always failed. Unexpected problems are continually arising for which the rules make no provision. Moreover, the rules, hastily adopted by the convention, are frequently worded vaguely and carelessly, and to put them into operation is difficult or impossible. It may easily happen, for example, that while provision is made for the payment of a sick benefit, the administrative machinery to carry out such a plan is not created or is wholly inadequate. The Supreme Court of the United States has managed, by subtle reasoning, to stretch the rigid American Constitution to meet new conditions. The trade-union officials, with less respect for the forms of the law, have openly and flagrantly violated their rules. Sometimes edicts containing new legislation are promulgated by the chief executive under the guise of judicial decisions. Frequently not even this excuse is presented. One example may be cited from the history of the Cigar Makers' International Union. In 1885 two local societies of cigar makers in Cincinnati issued a circular attacking the president of the international union and questioning the honesty of his intentions. The president promptly replied with an order to the effect that any local union making charges against an officer during the interval between convention and failing to substantiate them would forfeit its charter. This order was practically new legislation; but, going even further, the president gave the law a retroactive application by suspending the local union.<sup>2</sup>

Such unconstitutional acts occur most frequently during the early days of an organization when its rules are still in a formative stage, are general and vague, and have not yet, through experience, been elaborated in detail to meet contingencies. At practically every convention of the Iron Molders from 1864 to 1874 the general president reported

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<sup>2</sup> Proceedings, 1885.



that he had violated some rule or had created new ones. "I am prepared," he declared on one occasion, "to lay the constitution on the shelf and to do what seems best to save the organization, believing that it is better to have an organization without a constitution than to have a constitution without an organization."<sup>3</sup> Each time the convention pardoned his unlawful acts on the ground of expediency, or allowed him to escape with only a perfunctory reprimand.

The unlawful creation of new rules and the violation of existing ones by the officers is still found in some of the younger associations. The officials of perhaps a dozen of the newer unions with whom the writer has discussed this question have argued frankly that they must exercise such legislative power in order to run their organizations. In support of this contention, the chief executive of a union which was organized very recently gave the following illustration. The so-called constitution or book of rules adopted by the first convention was, he declared, a mass of generalities and inconsistencies, and was wholly unusable. He therefore rearranged and reworded the rules very carefully, and even added explanatory sections in an endeavor to express in consistent and intelligible form the ideas of the delegates as he remembered them. The rules which he thus formulated he caused to be printed and to be presented to his fellow-members. Naturally, as he naively confessed, many objections were made at first; but complaint soon ceased, and the union has continued to be governed by the rules which he promulgated.

In most organizations efficient and expeditious machinery for the adoption of amendments to the constitution during the period between conventions has been gradually created, and with this development there have been fewer violations and a more wholesome respect for the rules by officers and members. Indeed, some of the officials of the older and better organized unions, when asked whether they exercised unconstitutional legislative power, seem as much shocked at

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<sup>3</sup> Proceedings, 1867.

the idea as might have been a law- and precedent-loving judge of a superior court.

The officers in the early national unions were such as had been found necessary for the government of the local societies.<sup>4</sup> Nor during these early years were they unsuitable. In the local union the primary organ of government was the mass-meeting of members, and in the federal association it was the representative assembly. For the conduct of both the local mass-meeting and the federal assembly the same officers were needed, namely, a president to act as chairman, a vice-president to take his place when he was absent, and a recording secretary to keep the minutes. Between the meetings there was also needed for both local and national union a corresponding secretary, a financial secretary to collect dues, and a treasurer to take care of the funds. In 1851 the Printers made provision in their first constitution for a president, a vice-president, a recording secretary, a corresponding secretary, and a treasurer;<sup>5</sup> the Iron Molders in 1859 provided for a president, a recording secretary, a corresponding secretary, a treasurer, and a door-keeper;<sup>6</sup> the Cigar Makers for a president, a vice-president, an English recording secretary, a German recording secretary, a corresponding secretary, and a treasurer.<sup>7</sup>

Between conventions these officers had few duties to perform. At one of the early conventions of the Iron Molders' Union the president reported that there were so few duties for each officer that each one tried to do the work of all the rest.<sup>8</sup> The corresponding secretary of the same national organization complained in 1863 that he had very little to do. He seldom heard from the local unions except at long intervals when some local secretary happened to remember

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<sup>4</sup> The officers elected at the first national convention of Cigar Makers in 1864 were, with a single exception, the same as those provided for in the earliest extant constitution of the New York local union of the trade.

<sup>5</sup> Constitution, 1851.

<sup>6</sup> Constitution, in Synopsis of Proceedings, 1859.

<sup>7</sup> Constitution, in MS. Proceedings of the Convention, New York, June 21, 1864.

<sup>8</sup> Iron Molders' Journal, June, 1875.

that one requirement of the constitution was that subordinate societies should submit monthly reports. The financial secretary of the national union reported in 1863 that he had not heard from any local officers and had not performed any work for the organization during his term.<sup>9</sup> At first these officers were all unpaid. Later, some of them were voted annually by convention small sums, perhaps one hundred or two hundred dollars, or were given travelling expenses and were reimbursed for the time during which their official duties prevented them from working at their trades.

Some of the decentralized unions retained for some years the system of unpaid or nominally paid officials with few duties. The Printers continued this policy from 1852 to 1882, and the Bricklayers and Masons from 1867 until recently. In other trades, as the functions of the federal organizations increased, the system became wholly unworkable. Cooperation in the transaction of business between officers located in widely separated parts of the country was, to say the least, inconvenient. Few also were found willing to serve as officers without pay. Frequently these positions went begging, and usually new men were elected each term. Moreover, as often happens when men serve without pay, the officers were dilatory in performing their duties or neglected them entirely. On one occasion the secretary of one union became so disgusted with this system of government in general and the negligence of his brother officers in particular that he secured authority by vote of the local unions to exercise, with some assistance from the treasurer, all functions of government until the next convention.

A second stage was reached when all duties between conventions were performed by a single paid official. This stage was quickly attained in the unions of cigar makers, iron molders, iron boilers and puddlers, and other organizations whose activities increased so rapidly that there was soon enough work to keep one man busy. In the Iron Molders' Union after 1864 all power—executive, judicial,

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<sup>9</sup> Proceedings, 1863.

and even legislative—was vested during the period between conventions in a single paid officer, known as the president. The president acted as financial and corresponding secretary, edited the trade journal, and admitted new local societies to the federation. When time permitted, he attempted to organize the workers in non-union places. He visited localities where a strike was imminent, and endeavored to adjust the difficulty. As a combination of policeman and judge, he interpreted the national rules and enforced their due observance, sat in judgment on appeals of members from decisions of local unions, and adjusted differences between local unions. As a legislator, he promulgated rules on questions not covered by the existing constitution, and broke the rules whenever he thought that the emergency demanded such action. There was indeed one matter over which he had no power. He could not declare a strike. Also, though he collected the revenue, he was not entrusted with the safe keeping of the funds, these being under the care of the unsalaried treasurer. A similar development occurred about this time in the National Forge of the Sons of Vulcan.<sup>10</sup> A single salaried official exercised executive, judicial, and legislative functions. As in the Iron Molders' Union, he could not declare a strike, and was not entrusted with the care of the funds; otherwise his power was absolute during the period between conventions.<sup>11</sup>

The third stage in the development of the official staff was reached when the amount of business to be done had become too large for one person and was divided among several salaried officials, all of whom were stationed in the city selected as headquarters of the association. The two officers now found in the great majority of international unions are the president and the secretary or secretary-treasurer. The president acts as chairman at meetings of convention and

<sup>10</sup> Vulcan Record, vol. i, no. 6; Constitution, 1874.

<sup>11</sup> This feature of government was borrowed without change by the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, formed by the amalgamation of the Sons of Vulcan with two other national unions of iron and steel workers in 1875.

of the general executive board. He has supervision over the administrative affairs of the organization. He is a policeman enforcing the rules, and is frequently also a judge. He travels often to various parts of the country to organize new local unions, to encourage the weak ones, and to adjust disputes between the workmen and their employers.

The secretary or secretary-treasurer acts as secretary at meetings of the convention and of the general executive board. He serves as a medium of communication between the local societies and the central union. He edits the trade journal, save in a few organizations which have created a special official for this purpose or which entrust the president with this duty.<sup>12</sup> He keeps the financial accounts, and in a large majority of unions also has charge of the funds. In about forty out of one hundred and thirty international unions, however, the secretary must turn over all funds to a treasurer. This system has grave inconveniences. The duties of the treasurer require only a small part of his time; and usually he is paid no salary or only a nominal sum. He works at his trade and lives in his home city, which is probably at some distance from headquarters, where the secretary is stationed, and much time and energy are wasted in sending money back and forth. When a strike has been declared, funds are usually needed immediately by the local strike committee, and delay in obtaining them may cause serious results. For these reasons, most unions require the secretary to take care of the funds. In these unions he bears the title of secretary-treasurer.

In certain large and highly centralized unions having a great mass of business to be transacted the work of the secretary is divided among several paid officials. In fourteen out of one hundred and thirty unions an official known as the editor relieves the secretary of the work of editing the

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<sup>12</sup> The president serves as editor of the trade journal in the unions of railway conductors, teamsters, and leather workers on horse goods. The president of the National Brotherhood of Operative Potters is editor-in-chief of the journal, and the secretary is assistant editor.

trade journal.<sup>13</sup> In the Iron Molders' Union there are, besides the editor of the journal, an official known as the financier who keeps the financial books of the federal association and maintains general oversight over those of the local societies, a treasurer to safeguard the funds, a general secretary who conducts all correspondence and purchases the supplies, has reports printed, and attends to other similar business, and an assistant secretary who gives whatever aid is needed to the secretary and the financier. In the United Brewery Workmen there are three secretaries in addition to the editor of the journal. One of these secretaries attends to all correspondence. Another—the financial recording secretary—acts as recording secretary at meetings of the convention and of the general executive board, receives the dues, compiles statistics, and helps to conduct the correspondence. The third—the secretary-treasurer—keeps account of receipts and disbursements, has charge of the funds, buys supplies, and is responsible for the general conduct of the office. Another group of associations do not distribute the work of the secretary-treasurer among several officials, but provide an assistant secretary-treasurer to help in any way that may be needed.<sup>14</sup>

A few large and highly centralized unions have created travelling officials to relieve the president of duties requiring him to journey to various parts of the country. If this were not done, much of his time would be consumed in travelling, and he would be unable to perform his other duties. When the president is frequently absent from headquarters, the secretaries confess that they often assume the judicial robe of the president in order to clear the docket of rapidly accumulating cases, and that, when emergency demands, they discharge without constitutional warrant other powers of the

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<sup>13</sup> These unions are as follows: Bakery and Confectionery Workers, Brewery Workmen, Commercial Telegraphers, Iron Molders, Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers, Locomotive Engineers, Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Machinists, Maintenance-of-Way Employees, Mine Workers, Metal Polishers, Post Office Clerks, Stereotypers and Electrotypers, and Switchmen.

<sup>14</sup> In this group are the following unions: Coopers, Flint Glass Workers, Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, Machinists, and Tailors.

chief officer. Many times, however, the secretary hesitates to assume such responsibility, and business needing the immediate attention of the president is woefully neglected.

Very early in the history of the older organizations the president was relieved of part of the work of travelling by the appointment of special strike deputies who visit localities where strikes are imminent or in progress, send detailed reports of conditions to headquarters, and whenever it is possible bring about a peaceful settlement of the difficulty. Very early, also, the president was permitted to appoint organizers to stimulate the promotion of local societies in non-union districts. The vice-presidents, varying in number in the different organizations, are commonly utilized as organizers and strike deputies, though many national unions appoint other members to perform such service. Sometimes a vice-president is assigned to a particular district, but frequently he may be dispatched to any part of the country at the discretion of the president. A travelling officer with a specialized work is the union-label agitator. At national conventions and local meetings he advocates the purchase of goods which bear a label indicating that they have been manufactured by members of the union. Another travelling official found in the Cigar Makers' International Union and a few other organizations is the so-called financier, who goes from branch to branch, generally arriving unexpectedly, overhauls the financial accounts, and, when necessary, reorganizes the system of financial administration. The Cigar Makers' International Union, which makes use of strike deputies, label agitators, organizers, and a financier, has taken the lead in this division of labor among several travelling officials.<sup>15</sup>

A fixed salary is paid to the president by some sixty-two of one hundred and ten associations. In one of these unions he receives only one hundred and twenty dollars, in another

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<sup>15</sup> The president of the Cigar Makers' International Union spends most of his time at headquarters, where, aided by various clerical assistants, he performs the duties of president, secretary-treasurer, and editor of the trade journal.

two hundred dollars, and in two others only a nominal sum. In the other fifty-eight organizations his salary is sufficiently large to enable him to devote his whole time to the organization. Two unions pay only a thousand dollars, the others larger amounts, ranging in most of them from one to two thousand dollars. A few aristocrats among the labor officials, usually in unions, such as those of railway employees, whose members are skilled and well paid, receive as much as five thousand dollars a year. Forty-eight associations, including many small, weak, recently organized unions, make no provision for the salary of the president. In a few of them that officer is voted a sum of money regularly or occasionally by convention. In most of them he works at his trade, but is allowed travelling expenses and receives compensation for time lost in performance of his official duties, usually at the rate of wages prevailing in the craft. Sometimes the holder of such an unsalaried office makes great sacrifices in the cause of unionism. Frequent absences from work render him unpopular with his employer, who, conceiving the labor leader to be an agitator and a disturbing influence, is already prejudiced against him, and discharges him on slight pretext. Such unpaid officials have declared to the writer that they have walked the streets for days vainly seeking for work. When the president receives no pay, naturally the position is not keenly desired. Oftentimes good candidates cannot be induced to accept the office, or, if elected, refuse usually to serve a second term.

Almost invariably the secretary-treasurer is paid a salary, but in at least twelve out of a hundred associations he receives only a nominal sum ranging from about thirty dollars to three hundred dollars. The secretary-treasurer in these unions, all of them small and newly organized, works at his trade, and performs the duties of his office at night or during holidays.

The vice-presidents usually work at their trade and receive only travelling expenses and compensation for time spent in the performance of their official duties; but in at least twelve out of one hundred and ten associations, in-



cluding the larger and financially more prosperous ones, from one to seven vice-presidents are employed continuously by the union at a fixed salary.<sup>18</sup> When the vice-presidents are not utilized as strike deputies, organizers, or label agitators, the members who are appointed to such positions are sometimes employed continuously at a fixed annual salary. For example, organizers who act as strike agents and perform other duties as occasion requires are kept constantly in the field by the Bakers, the Barbers, and the Tailors. More frequently, however, such travelling officials are hired temporarily by the national president or the executive board as they are needed.

There is a sharp contrast between the office facilities at the disposal of the officials of a weak and struggling and of a strong and powerful trade union. "This is the headquarters of the international association," grandiloquently remarked the secretary of a small union, as he pointed to a dilapidated desk standing in one corner of the family living room, where nightly after his work in the factory he performed the duties of his office. In the same city a few blocks away the officers of another organization are housed in a large, modern, splendidly built office-building. Here the elevator carries the visitor to the ninth story where the suite of rooms rented by the union is located. One enters a large reception room where a number of clerks are busily employed. Beyond is the private office of the president, and a nearby room is occupied by his private stenographer. In a large adjoining room the secretary, his assistant, and several clerks are at work. The editor has his own little den. There is also a committee or conference room where, around a large table, meetings of the executive board are sometimes held. The rooms are not furnished luxuriously, but are equipped with all necessary office fixtures,—rugs, oak chairs, tables, desks, filing cases, shelves, iron safes, presses, and typewriting machines.

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<sup>18</sup> Among these unions are included those of the Bricklayers and Masons, Iron Molders, Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, Miners, Printers, and several organizations of railway employees.

Trade-union leadership is a profession, and to make a success of it native ability and experience are required. The leader must learn to write, not necessarily grammatically, but with force and clearness. He is doomed to an unending succession of speeches, and so must develop self-possession on the platform and the power to hold audiences. He must know how to handle his men. He must learn that much profanity, particularly in dealing with employers, does not constitute forcibleness or diplomacy. He must know intimately the conditions of the trade and also much about the cost and methods of production. He must be resourceful, constructive, and patient; he must be constantly ready to meet new and unexpected situations with few resources to aid him, and perhaps with a discouraged and carpingly critical following at his back.

The trade unions have made little attempt, however, to impose qualifications on the candidates for international offices. Usually, of course, the candidate must have been a member of the union for a certain length of time. Some of the early unions provided also that only delegates to the representative assembly should be eligible, but this limitation on the selection of candidates was soon found to be undesirable and was abolished. Nevertheless, the important officials are usually picked men. Most of them have held some office, such as that of president, secretary, or business agent in the local union. Often they have also served as delegates at one or perhaps several conventions. Sometimes they have held minor offices in the international union; perhaps they have been organizers or label agitators, have later been made vice-president, and finally have been promoted to the presidency or the secretaryship. Yet even with this preparatory education in subordinate positions, the newly elected leader comes to his office as very raw and crude material, and attains efficiency only after some years of experience.

For this reason the older unions have tended to lengthen the term of office and to reelect officials for several terms. A president of the Cigar Makers' International Union, who was first elected in 1877, continued to hold that position

until 1891. Then he resigned, to discharge, at the request of his fellow-members, the less strenuous duties of financier for the union. His successor continues to occupy the office of president. The president elected by the Iron Molders at the third convention in 1861 was continued in office until his death nine years later. The terms of each of his successors have been as long or longer. The secretary of the provisional committee formed to bring into existence a federal association of carpenters in 1881 became the first secretary-treasurer of the newly established union, and continued to hold office for nearly twenty years.

What becomes of the trade-union leader when he is defeated for reelection? Sometimes, indeed, he returns to his trade, but not very often. Years of office work have rendered him incapable of manual labor or have created a disinclination for it. Some ex-officials, relying on the patronage of a large host of acquaintances gained through their former positions, have opened saloons, and are doing a thriving business. Some of the younger ones have studied law. Many have gone into politics. Various former officials of the miners' union are now state mining inspectors. Some union leaders occupy positions in state bureaus of labor and statistics. Some hold offices in one or another department of the Federal Government. Some have been elected to various city councils. A few have attained membership in the Congress of the United States. Trade-union leadership is, as Sidney and Beatrice Webb have pointed out, excellent training for political life.<sup>17</sup> Such men know the needs of the working class and are sometimes well fitted to represent them in state and Federal legislatures. If a labor party shall finally emerge in the United States, trade-union leaders will probably increase in political prominence, and their influence will be strongly felt in the shaping of legislation.

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<sup>17</sup> *Industrial Democracy*, pp. 65-71.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

National executive boards were created to serve as a check on the power of the national officers. Prior to the panic of 1873, however, no such executive boards existed in any of the more important national associations. To be sure, the national unions of Cigar Makers<sup>1</sup> and Bricklayers<sup>2</sup> had so-called executive committees, but these committees were composed solely of national officers.<sup>3</sup> An exception was the national trade association of hat finishers. The executive board of this association, composed of eight members—none of them holding any other office—exercised judicial power which in other associations would have been vested in the president or other national officials.<sup>4</sup> Another exception was the Journeymen Stone Cutters' Association, whose committee of management, composed of eight members, was elected by the local union or unions in the city chosen as headquarters of the association, in imitation of the English system of the governing branch. Since the committee of management was vested between conventions with all judicial and all executive powers requiring the exercise of much discretion, there remained for the one salaried officer only purely routine secretarial and financial duties.

In the other associations the national officers were wholly

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution, in MS. Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Session of the Cigar Makers' International Union, Buffalo, N. Y., September 2-6, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> Constitution, 1867.

<sup>3</sup> The executive committee of the Cigar Makers' International Union was composed in 1867 of the president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. In the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union it consisted about this time of the president, vice-president, and secretary.

<sup>4</sup> Constitution, 1863.

unchecked by any higher authority during the period between conventions. Luckily the functions of the federated unions were so few that the officers had very little opportunity to display arbitrary power. But the functions of the national unions were increasing rapidly, and at the same time duties which had been divided among several unpaid officials were being vested in a single salaried officer. On his growing absolutism the infrequent conventions exercised little restraint. In the absence of a general executive board, therefore, he exercised despotic power, never hesitating even to overturn the old rules or to adopt new ones whenever an emergency demanded such a course of action.

After 1875 a tendency to form general executive boards became manifest, and by 1880 such boards were being maintained by practically all existing national unions. At the same time, organizations like the Cigar Makers' International Union were enlarging their executive boards to include a majority of other than paid officers. The paid officials who had ruled so long with unrestricted powers not infrequently made stubborn resistance against the inauguration of a policy which deprived them of their authority. In the International Union of Machinists and Blacksmiths a bitter fight was fought about 1874 between the president and the new executive board, and this quarrel may have added its weight to the existing industrial depression in pushing the union downhill toward the utter demoralization which occurred a few years later.

In the Iron Molders' Union the president was emphatic in expressing his antagonism toward the newly created executive board, which he denounced as a foreign device utterly alien to American trade unionism. The president, led on by almost unlimited opportunity, had yielded to temptation, and had appropriated some of the funds. One of the first results of the creation of the executive board was the discovery of this malfeasance. The president strove desperately to maintain himself in power. He began with the declaration that he would not be the clerk of any board

or committee. Restricted in authority by the new governmental reorganization, he was nevertheless not wholly impotent. His chief weapons of defense were power to expel from the organization and control over the trade journal. In the official trade journal he denounced the accusations made against him as libels inspired by the desire of his enemies to remove him from office and secure the position for a rival. He refused to publish any statements by the other side. When one member of the national executive board persuaded his local union to publish and distribute a circular containing a statement of the board's position, the president suspended the local society, and so made this member ineligible to hold office. Several members of the board who belonged to subordinate branches which were somewhat remiss in the payment of assessments were likewise rendered ineligible by the suspension of their local unions. Other members of the board were removed from office on the charge of failure to attend to their duties. The efforts of the president were fruitless. A special convention was called, and this convention removed him from office and elected his successor.<sup>5</sup>

In the Cigar Makers' International Union friction arose in 1883 between the president and the executive board because of the failure of the constitution to define carefully their respective powers. Charges of overstepping his authority were brought against the president, and these charges the executive board proceeded to investigate. The president denied the right of the board to do so. He refused to appropriate the money necessary for the investigation, and, when the money was advanced by the local society making the charges, he refused to accept the decision. A careful investigation by the convention was necessary before the controversy was finally settled. At the same time, the respective powers of the president and of the board were more precisely defined.<sup>6</sup> The executive board was vested

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<sup>5</sup> Iron Molders' Journal, December 10, 1878, January 10, 1879; Proceedings, 1879.

<sup>6</sup> Proceedings, 1883.

with authority to try accused officers, including the president, and to submit their findings to a vote of all the members of the union.

The creation of the executive board has limited greatly the judicial power of the president. In more than fifty of the one hundred and thirty unions he possesses no judicial power. Only in nine organizations can he discipline the local unions,<sup>7</sup> such authority being reserved to the general executive board. To prevent the board from wasting its time in the consideration of unimportant complaints, the president is frequently given authority to hear appeals of members from decisions of local unions, but appeals may nearly always be made from any of his judicial decisions to the executive board. Very frequently, indeed, the board merely confirms the judgment of the president, as is shown by the following table to be the case in the Cigar Makers' International Union:—

APPEALS FROM DECISION OF PRESIDENT TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
IN THE CIGAR MAKERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION

Years	No. of appeals	President's decision overruled
1883-1885	21	1
1885-1887	31	1
1887-1889	57	1
1889-1891	43	0
1891-1893	48	1
1893-1895	64	0

Nevertheless, trade-union officials are undoubtedly influenced by the fear of having their judgments overruled by the executive board. Extra constitutional legislative power is still exercised by the president in some of the newer associations; indeed, three unions definitely authorize that official to promulgate rules not conflicting with the constitu-

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<sup>7</sup> The president is permitted to discipline the local societies in the following unions: Locomotive Engineers, Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Maintenance-of-Way Employees, Railroad Trainmen, Railway Clerks, Railway Telegraphers, Stationary Engineers, and Street and Electric Railway Employees

tion.<sup>8</sup> Many associations, on the other hand, take away his excuse for usurping the role of legislator by providing for the initiation and adoption of amendments to the constitution by vote of the members, and sixteen unions achieve the same result by vesting the executive board with limited legislative power.<sup>9</sup>

The executive board levies assessments, appoints temporary officers to fill vacancies, and performs other duties which were vested in the president in the early days of the older organizations. The duty of declaring strikes, which none of the older organizations ventured to entrust to the president, has been delegated to the executive board by practically all unions save the few which submit this question to popular vote. Perhaps the most important function of the board is to bring to trial and remove officers for misdemeanors and neglect of duty, since control over officers depends so largely upon the ability of the board to exercise this power.

The executive board exercises important functions in all save fourteen national unions. The exceptions are the National Association of Marine Engineers, the Paving Cutters' Union, three organizations of iron, steel, and tin workers,<sup>10</sup> and nine unions of railway employees. The sole function of the executive board in the National Association of Marine Engineers is to declare strikes, and in the Paving Cutters' Union to levy assessments and discipline the

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<sup>8</sup> These are the Railway Expressmen, Window Glass Workers, and Window Glass Cutters and Flatteners.

<sup>9</sup> The executive board can enact rules not conflicting with those already passed by convention in the following national unions: Bill Posters and Billers, Boot and Shoe Makers, Brick, Tile, and Terra Cotta Workers, Brushmakers, Fur Workers, Glass House Employees, Glass Workers, Rubber Workers, Slate Workers, Theatrical Stage Employees, and Tip Printers.

The Glass Bottle Blowers permit the board to suspend the rules until next convention, and the Leather Workers for ninety days.

The Flour and Cereal Mill Employees give the board of management authority to adopt rules governing the label; the Railway Clerks, rules relating to the insurance department; and the Wood, Wire, and Metal Lathers, general administrative rules.

<sup>10</sup> These are the Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, the Blast Furnace Workers and Smelters, and the Tin Plate Workers.



local societies. In the Tin Plate Workers' International Protective Association the only definite duty of the executive board is to levy assessments. In the other two unions of iron, steel, and tin workers the board has no definite functions save the very vague one of advising the national officers on matters not covered by the rules. In five of the nine railway unions the board may bring to trial and remove officers, in two unions it exercises a very limited power of appeal, and in two others it has both of these functions.

Naturally, the power of the president is larger in associations where the executive board has been vested with very few functions than in those where the contrary is found. This is true, to be sure, only to a slight extent in the three unions of iron, steel and tin workers, since various committees of the district unions declare strikes, render judicial decisions, and perform functions which are delegated in other organizations to the executive board. In the remaining eleven associations the president is very powerful. The secretary of the Paving Cutters' Union and the presidents of the various railway unions thus have authority to determine whether local societies shall be permitted to strike with the financial support of the federal organization,—a power which was not wielded by despotic officials of the Iron Molders' Union and other long established associations even in the early days. Again, in seven of the nine railway unions the finality of the president's judicial authority is undoubtedly much increased by denying the right of appeal to the executive board from all or most of his decisions.<sup>11</sup> During the weeks until the next convention his decision must be accepted as final. Appeals are also apt to be less frequent, since by the time the delegate assembly convenes the dispute may have been forgotten, or changed conditions may have rendered a reversal of the decision useless. In nine associations the executive board is composed wholly or

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<sup>11</sup> Four unions permit no appeal to the executive board from any of the president's decisions, and three others only from certain important decisions, such as suspension of a local society or a judgment on some question not covered by the rules.

in large part of salaried officials who are stationed at headquarters and work together daily in close relationship. Hence the board fails of its chief purpose, namely, to restrict the power of such paid officials during the period between conventions.

Undoubtedly, the salaried officers with their detailed and intimate knowledge of the affairs of the organization should take part in the deliberations of the executive committee, and perhaps should even cast a vote,<sup>12</sup> but surely they should not predominate on this committee. Nevertheless, the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union, as at the beginning of its history, permits the president, the first vice-president, and the secretary to render joint judicial decisions and to exercise wide administrative powers, including the authority even to declare strikes. The Printers vest similar authority in the paid official staff composed of the president, the secretary-treasurer, and the two vice-presidents. In the unions of five other trades the officers, exclusive of the vice-presidents, predominate on the board,<sup>13</sup> and in the Coopers and Lace Operatives the board consists of an equal number of salaried officials and non-salaried members. Moreover, even when they receive no salary, the members of the executive board are frequently selected for special service by the president, so that the chief executive has the opportunity to create a coterie of adherents by letting fall the plums to those who favor his policies.

Meetings of the executive committee are held infrequently because of the expense of bringing together its members, who are usually scattered about in various parts of the country. Regular meetings of the board are held by only

<sup>12</sup> The unions of carpenters and joiners, glass workers, tailors, and window glass cutters and flatteners permit one or more of the paid officials to be present at meetings of the executive board and take part in the deliberations, but to cast no vote.

<sup>13</sup> In the Elastic Goring Weavers the board consists of the president, secretary, and one other; in the Post Office Clerks, it is composed of the president, secretary, treasurer, and one other; and in the Leather Workers on Horse Goods, Pen and Pocket-Knife Grinders, Shipwrights, Joiners, Caulkers and Boat Builders, of three officers and two others.

eighteen of the one hundred and thirty unions,—annually by ten, semi-annually by three, and quarterly by five. In the other organizations the board may be called together in a serious emergency at the discretion of the president or on demand of the members of the local unions.

The executive committee transacts much of its business by mail or telegraph. A few organizations impose fines on members of the board for failure to telegraph their decisions on strike applications within twenty-four hours. Nevertheless, this method of transacting business causes some delay. It likewise handicaps the board in giving intelligent judgments, since its members have no opportunity to discuss with one another the various phases of the problems under consideration. Moreover, the board must depend largely on the paid officers for information concerning questions submitted for its decision, and hence it is limited in its ability to check the absorption of power by such officials.

A few unions have sought a solution of this difficulty by the adoption of the English system of the governing branch. Under this form of government a certain place is chosen as the headquarters of the organization; then the local union or unions at headquarters select certain of their own members to constitute the general board of management. A paid official, known as the secretary or secretary-treasurer, is elected by vote of all the members of the national union. This officer has merely routine secretarial and financial duties. The board meets weekly or oftener, and transacts much business that in other organizations is performed by the salaried officials.

The system of the governing branch is, however, unpopular among the American unions. Only six associations have copied the exact form as it exists in the English societies. Some have experimented with the system and have subsequently abandoned it; a few have adopted it in some modified form. In four unions the members of the board of management are selected from local societies within a radius of one hundred and fifty to three hundred miles

from headquarters. In the Bakers and the Brewery Workmen part of the board are selected by the branches at headquarters, but a majority of them are chosen by convention from local societies in various parts of the country. The quorum living at headquarters meets at least once every two weeks. The matters of business on which it renders an opinion are submitted to the outside members, and the final decision is announced at the following meeting.

The wide territorial jurisdiction of American unions and the great conflict of sectional interests have made the system of the governing branch impracticable. For example, the Carpenters and Joiners, who adopted the system in 1884, abandoned it six years later because the local societies in the various sections of the country refused to be dominated by the members in one city.<sup>14</sup> Nor have the modifications of the system been wholly successful. In those organizations where the members have been selected from local unions within one hundred and fifty to three hundred miles from headquarters the board, while it is less liable to be influenced by local interests, meets less frequently, that is, only once a month. The outside members of the executive board in the United Brewery Workmen are at a disadvantage as regards those at headquarters, and have been called at times the "fifth wheel on the coach" or "the tail of the kite." At times the members of the board who constitute the quorum at headquarters have used their power to further local interests. On one occasion the quorum in the United Brewery Workmen voted to continue the payment of strike benefits to the unemployed members of a local society at headquarters long after the strike was technically over and their places had been filled by the employers. The outside members at last protested, and insisted that the local union at headquarters should be required to support its unemployed from its own funds, as any other local society would have been compelled to do long before.

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<sup>14</sup> Report of the Secretary to Convention, and Constitution as amended in 1884, in *The Carpenter*, August, 1884; see also *The Carpenter*, January, 1891.

The members in each section of the country and in each division of the trade demand representation on the executive board. About twenty associations require that each of the several districts into which their territorial jurisdiction is divided be represented on the executive committee. Each member of the board is then the official head of his district. Canada usually constitutes one of these districts, and a few organizations making no other provision for sectional representation permit the Canadian local unions to have one of their fellow-countrymen on the board. Other national unions provide that no two members of the board must be from the same city or even from the same State or province. Sometimes national unions composed of only a few local societies, such as those of cutting die and cutter makers, sawsmiths, and a few other very small trades, permit each local union to have one member on the executive board. In these small organizations the executive committee sometimes takes the place of the convention. Fourteen unions, four of them included in the twenty that provide for territorial representation, require that the members of the board must be chosen from each of the several branches of the trade. The majority of unions object, however, to the adoption of any iron-clad rule on the ground that it limits them in the choice of efficient men. The officials of such associations declare that an effort is nearly always made to give representation to the different sections of the country and to the various branches of trade.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE INITIATIVE AND THE REFERENDUM

Originally, as has already been noted, the national trade unions elected officers and transacted all other business—executive, legislative and judicial—through the convention of delegates. A number of national unions still continue to vest such unlimited, wide-reaching powers in this representative assembly, but the great majority of them have limited its power to a greater or less extent by the use of the initiative and referendum. The trade unions submit a far wider variety of business to popular vote than do political governments. By this method they elect officers, adopt rules, declare strikes, levy assessments, render judicial decisions, and transact other business. In a few organizations the convention has been abolished, and all questions are determined by the vote of the members.

The right of popular initiative exists in American trade unions only in a modified sense. A member, for example, may propose any amendment to the international constitution at a meeting of his local union, but his proposal must be endorsed by at least a majority of the members in his own branch, must be signed by the local officers, and must have the seal of the subordinate union attached before it can be recognized at headquarters. Then it must be endorsed by the general executive board or by a certain number of other branches before it can be submitted to popular vote. In other words, the local unions, not the members in their individual capacity, have the right to propose legislation. The general executive board has an equal right with the local societies in nearly all cases to submit measures to the referendum. Indeed, in some eight unions the general

executive board alone may exercise this privilege. The subordinate unions have no right of initiative.<sup>1</sup>

The organs of discussion and deliberation are the trade journal, special circulars, and the local mass-meetings. A measure proposed by a local union is stated in the journal or in a circular to each branch; then the question is discussed in the local meetings and perhaps in the columns of the journal. As a rule, the members vote on matters relating to the national organization at a regular meeting of the subordinate union, often without secrecy, in the same way as on purely local measures. Exception is usually made in the election of officers, when all the paraphernalia of the Australian ballot system now so familiar to Americans are used.<sup>2</sup> Ballots are printed by the international union, and an inspector and subinspectors are elected by each local society. On a certain day the polls are kept open, sometimes for six hours. The inspectors count the ballots, and make returns to the general canvassing board, which adds up the votes and announces the result.<sup>3</sup>

The historical development of the referendum in American unions presents a sharp contrast to that of the British unions, as outlined by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. According to them, in the British unions during the early period from 1824 to 1870 the congress of elected representatives "either found no place at all or else was called together only at long intervals and for strictly limited purposes." The supreme authority was the "voices" of all concerned, and to this authority was referred "every proposition not covered by the original articles together with all questions of peace and war." Experience with the referendum soon made

<sup>1</sup> The general executive board alone has power to initiate legislation in the following unions: Actors, Bookbinders, Ceramic, Mosaic and Encaustic Tile Layers, Elevator Constructors, Hatters, Painters, Decorators and Paper Hangers, Tin Plate Workers, and Theatrical Stage Employees.

<sup>2</sup> The unions are said to have used the Australian ballot system before it was adopted by the state and municipal governments in the United States.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see Constitution of the Cigar Makers' International Union, 1896, fourteenth edition, secs. 11-42.

obvious its disadvantages, and after 1870 there was a reaction. The use of the referendum was limited in a number of unions, the branches being sometimes allowed to submit amendments only once every year or, perhaps, only once in ten years. In a few organizations the system was wholly abolished. "Thus we see," say the Webbs, "that half a century of practical experience with the initiative and referendum has led not to its extension but to an ever stricter limitation of its application."<sup>4</sup>

The experience of the American unions has been exactly the reverse. The American workmen, perhaps because of their political environment, seemed attached to the representative form of government during the early years. They adopted the referendum slowly and apparently with great reluctance. The national associations of printers, hat finishers, iron molders, and iron and steel workers, formed prior to the Civil War, made no attempt for many years to use the initiative and referendum, and some of them have only very recently adopted the system. The one exception was the Stone Cutters, who, in borrowing the constitution of their English fellow-craftsmen, copied among other features of the English societies the method of legislating by popular vote.<sup>5</sup> After 1875 the Iron Molders<sup>6</sup> and the Cigar Makers began experimenting with the referendum. About 1875 the Miners' National Association was submitting amendments adopted by convention to a vote of the local lodges.<sup>7</sup> The Granite Cutters, who copied the constitution of the Stone Cutters, ceased to hold conventions almost immediately after the formation of their national union in 1877, and began to refer all matters to a vote of the members.

By 1880 the idea of transacting business by popular vote had become familiar to American trade unionists. Since that date the system has been adopted by most of the older organizations, and has been copied from them by many of the newer unions. It is now used for a widely varying num-

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<sup>4</sup> Pp. 13-26.

<sup>5</sup> Circular, April, May, 1858.

<sup>6</sup> Constitution, 1876.

<sup>7</sup> National Labor Tribune, October 30, 1874.



ber of purposes by ninety-five out of one hundred and thirty national and international associations. It has also been used occasionally by the Bricklayers and other unions which do not make definite provision for it, in order to pass on measures needing immediate consideration during the period between conventions.<sup>8</sup>

When first introduced, the referendum has usually been employed by an organization for a very restricted number of purposes. As the members have grown accustomed to direct selfgovernment, its use has almost invariably been extended, until in a few national unions the convention has been abolished, and all business is transacted by popular vote. This gradual replacement of the representative by the democratic form of government is well illustrated by the experience of the Cigar Makers' International Union. About 1875, eleven years after the founding of the organization, a rule was adopted permitting local societies to propose constitutional amendments, which after publication and discussion in the journal of the union were submitted to referendum vote. Two years later it was enacted that no measures passed by the convention should go into effect until ratified by a majority of the local societies. In 1879 the policy of submitting application for strike benefits to the subordinate unions was inaugurated. In 1884 the members and the local unions were allowed to appeal from judicial decisions of the executive board to a vote of the membership. Finally, the system of electing officers by popular vote was established in 1891.<sup>9</sup> Conventions, which at first were held annually, were later held only biennially, then triennially, and since 1896 have been wholly discontinued.

The initiative and referendum are most commonly employed to adopt amendments to the constitution. They are so employed by about seventy of the one hundred and thirty

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<sup>8</sup> President's Annual Address, in Proceedings of the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union, 1876, p. 6; Proceedings, 1877, pp. 13-14, 19, 22; Report of the Secretary, in Proceedings, 1884.

<sup>9</sup> See Constitutions, 1879, 1884, 1891.

national unions studied. Some fifteen organizations,<sup>10</sup> all with one exception<sup>11</sup> included in these seventy unions, provide that all amendments adopted by convention must be referred for ratification to popular vote. The Printing Pressmen require the submission of measures involving an increase of dues, and the Ladies' Garment Workers of all direct proposals to increase dues. Particular measures adopted by convention must be submitted to the members at the request of a fixed number of local societies in the national unions of Letter Carriers and Slate, Tile and Tin Roofers.<sup>12</sup> The Letter Carriers, Brewery Workmen, and Wood Carvers give the convention discretionary power to refer an amendment or resolution to popular vote whenever they deem it expedient. Without such special authorization, the conventions of many other associations pursue this policy whenever they do not desire to assume responsibility for the passage of a certain measure.

Though a few American unions employed the strike referendum at an earlier date than the legislative referendum, applications for strike benefits are now submitted to a vote of the members by only twenty-one organizations, less than one sixth of the national unions studied and less than one third of the number legislating by popular vote. In thirteen of these twenty-one organizations all strike applications are first referred to the executive board; then, if the local union making the application is dissatisfied with the decision of the board, it is referred to a vote of the members. Four unions submit strike applications involving more than a certain number of members to popular vote, and less

<sup>10</sup> These unions are as follows: Actors, Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, Carriage and Wagon Workers, Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, Cigar Makers, Garment Workers, Western Federation of Miners, Pattern Makers, Piano, Organ, and Musical Instrument Workers, Shirt, Waist and Laundry Workers, Tailors, Tobacco Workers, and Woodsmen and Saw Mill Workers.

<sup>11</sup> The exception is the Western Federation of Miners.

<sup>12</sup> The Letter Carriers submit measures adopted by convention to popular vote at the request of ten branches, aggregating fifty or more members, and the Slate, Tile and Tin Roofers on demand of two local unions.

important ones to the executive board; but in three of them, dissatisfied local societies may appeal from decisions of the board to popular vote. Four organizations submit all strike applications to the referendum.<sup>13</sup>

In thirty-four unions the general membership constitutes a supreme court to which local unions can appeal from decisions of the general executive board. This right of appeal is accorded only to local societies in nine unions<sup>14</sup> and only to impeached national officers in fourteen others.<sup>15</sup> Eleven organizations permit both local societies and impeached officers to appeal their cases to this popular tribunal.<sup>16</sup> Usually the national executive board is the highest court to which an individual member can refer his case, though in four of the above unions individual members as well as local societies may appeal to the popular vote.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The following unions permit appeals from decisions of the executive board on strike applications: Actors, Broom and Whisk Makers, Ceramic, Mosaic and Encaustic Tile Layers, Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, Coopers, Garment Workers, Glass Workers, Ladies' Garment Workers, Leather Workers on Horse Goods, Painters, Decorators and Paper Hangers, Shirt, Waist and Laundry Workers, Street and Electric Railway Employees, and Tailors.

The following refer applications involving more than a certain number of members directly to popular vote, and those involving less to the executive board: Cigar Makers, Piano, Organ and Musical Instrument Workers, Tobacco Workers, and Wood Carvers. All except the Wood Carvers permit appeals from the executive board to popular vote.

The following submit all strike applications to the referendum: Blacksmiths, Flint Glass Workers, Marble Workers, and Stone Cutters.

<sup>14</sup> These are the following unions: Actors, Bakers, Blacksmiths, Carriage and Wagon Workers, Electrical Workers, Metal Polishers, Retail Clerks, Steam Engineers, and Tobacco Workers.

<sup>15</sup> These are the following unions: Carpenters, Flint Glass Workers, Interior Freight Handlers and Warehousemen, Iron Molders, Ladies' Garment Workers, Leather Workers, Lithographers, Longshoremen, Pilots, Quarry Workers, Railway Clerks, Sheet Metal Workers (only the general secretary-treasurer may so appeal), Shirt, Waist and Laundry Workers, and Street and Electric Railway Employees.

<sup>16</sup> These are the following unions: Broom and Whisk Makers, Cigar Makers, Glass Workers, Pattern Makers, Paper Box Workers, Painters, Decorators and Paper Hangers, Paving Cutters, Piano, Organ and Musical Instrument Workers, Travellers' Goods and Leather Novelty Workers, Window Glass Cutters and Flatteners, and Woodsmen and Saw Mill Workers.

<sup>17</sup> These are the following unions: Blacksmiths, Pattern Makers, Piano, Organ and Musical Instrument Workers, and Metal Polishers.

The American unions have been slow to adopt the method of electing officers by popular vote. Popular elections were indeed not held save by the Stone Cutters, the Granite Cutters, and perhaps one or two other trades until after 1890. Only eighteen organizations now elect officers by popular vote.<sup>18</sup> Assessments are levied by popular vote by the Barbers, Chain Makers, Glass Bottle Blowers, Lace Operatives, Letter Carriers, Paper Box Workers, and Woodsmen and Saw Mill Workers. Ten organizations permit any question the consideration of which cannot be conveniently postponed to the next convention to be submitted to the members at the request of the executive board or of a specified minimum number of local societies.<sup>19</sup>

The American unions have used the initiative and referendum much less extensively than have the British trade unions. In Great Britain, unions such as the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, which transact their business solely through a representative body, are notable exceptions. In America at least thirty-five national unions out of about one hundred and thirty do not make use of the referendum. These thirty-five unions are nearly all small and unimportant, however, and most of them have been recently organized. In Great Britain nearly all the unions have abolished the system of holding conventions at regular intervals, and transact all business by vote of the members. In America this extreme policy is pursued by only a few organizations.

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<sup>18</sup> The following unions permit local societies to nominate candidates, and the election is by popular vote: Boiler Makers and Iron Shipbuilders, Boot and Shoe Workers, Brick, Tile and Terra Cotta Workers, Carriage and Wagon Workers, Cigar Makers, Leather Workers on Horse Goods, Lace Operatives, Machinists, Metal Polishers, Metal Mechanics, Metal Workers, Mine Workers, Pattern Makers, Retail Clerks, Printers, Stone Cutters, Tobacco Workers, and Woodsmen and Saw Mill Workers.

In the Brewery Workmen, Carpenters, and Glass Workers, officers are nominated by the convention and elected by popular vote.

<sup>19</sup> These are the following unions: Bakers and Confectionery Workers, Brewery Workmen, Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, Garment Workers, Lithographers, Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, Western Federation of Miners, Printers, and Window Glass Workers.

No convention has been called by the Granite Cutters since 1880, three years after the formation of the organization. The Cigar Makers have not held a convention since 1896. The Paving Cutters make no mention of a convention in their constitution and the Stone Cutters refer to it only incidentally. Some five other associations call a convention only when the popular vote has so ordered.<sup>20</sup> Another group submits to the referendum at regular intervals the question: "Shall a convention be held this year?" Sometimes the meeting of the representative body is postponed by vote of the members year after year. But the representative assembly is still convoked periodically in the great majority of American unions, and the initiative and referendum are used chiefly to supplement the work of the delegates during the time when convention is not in session.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb have attributed the adoption of the system of the initiative and referendum by British trade unionists to a dominant desire on purely theoretical or even sentimental grounds for direct government by the members. The British trade unionists, they declare, have possessed the most childlike faith, not only that all men are equal, but also that what concerns all should be decided by all. Like the citizens of Uri or Appenzell, they have been slow to recognize any other authority than the voices of all concerned.<sup>21</sup> In their early local organizations the members strove to transact all business at the general meeting, and grudgingly delegated any functions either to officers or to committees. When such delegation of duties became necessary, they sought by short terms of service and by rotation in office to prevent the assumption of undue power and authority by particular members. After the national associations were formed, the same ideal of democracy soon led to the abandonment of representative conventions, to the

<sup>20</sup> These unions are as follows: Lace Operatives, Metal Polishers, Pattern Makers, Quarry Workers, and Tobacco Workers.

<sup>21</sup> Pp. 3, 8.

election of permanent salaried officers by popular vote, and to the transaction of all business by means of the initiative and referendum.

The American workmen have not adopted the initiative and referendum because of that innate love of democracy to which Sidney and Beatrice Webb have ascribed the adoption of the referendum by British trade unions. James Bryce, in his *American Commonwealth*, has said, "The Americans have not a theory of the state, have felt no need for one, being content, like the English, to base their constitutional ideas upon law and history." But they have had, he thinks, certain "ground ideas," certain "dogmas and maxims," and chief among these is the political axiom that "the most completely popular government is the best." So it has been with the American trade unionists. Probably at no time in the history of American unions would the members have denied, if asked, the eminent desirability of a more popular form of government, yet they have seldom urged for this reason the adoption of the initiative and referendum. The official journal of the Cigar Makers, during the period when the movement toward a wider use of direct government was in full force, contained no idealization, no discussion even, of the fundamental necessity of allowing the members to govern themselves directly.

In other trades such arguments have been occasionally used. A writer in an early journal of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, in speaking of the referendum, declared: "It gives each member his full voice in the affairs of the Brotherhood. It allows the members to rule and does away with the autocratic power of the delegates; it consults the judgment of every member, and gives us the ripest and best legislation. This principle of general vote is truly democratic in the proper sense of the terms."<sup>22</sup> Another writer in the same journal said: "The initiative and referendum is an excellent means to inform members thoroughly of all the workings of our organization. Any trade

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<sup>22</sup> The Carpenter, May, 1883.

which does not recognize this is doomed to destruction. Autocracy is bound to fall before the desire of the people to rule themselves." Yet such statements are rarely made save to supplement and bolster up other weightier arguments in favor of the referendum. Furthermore, when the referendum was originally adopted by some of the older organizations, its form was not truly democratic, since each local union was allowed one vote irrespective of its size. This method of voting was advocated by the small local unions, who were always fearful of being dominated by the large societies. Only after a long struggle were the proposals to cast the vote according to membership crowned with success.

Under such a system a minority of the members can easily outvote the majority. In the early days of the Iron Molders' Union the president, writing in the journal concerning the injustice of this method, declared: "The present law provides that if one third of the unions do not vote in the negative when a strike circular is issued, the strike shall be authorized. This law would be fair if each local had the same number of members; but the fact is that one-third of our unions contain over two-thirds of our members. Almost one-third of the unions may vote against the strike, yet the remaining two-thirds, comprising only one-third of the membership, can authorize a strike and compel the other two-thirds of the members to support it. Thus the minority can rule the majority."<sup>23</sup> Domination by the minority was similarly possible for some years in the Cigar Makers' International Union. In 1883, at a time when each society was allowed one vote on matters submitted to referendum, one hundred and forty-three of the one hundred and sixty-four local unions composing the International Union contained a minority of the membership.<sup>24</sup> In fact, certain apprenticeship rules, grossly unfair to the large local unions,

<sup>23</sup> International Journal [Iron Molders], March, 1874.

<sup>24</sup> These 143 local societies contained only 6842 of the 14,000 members belonging to the international union. These figures have been compiled from the semiannual financial report contained in the Cigar Makers' Official Journal, December 15, 1882, June, 1883.

were adopted at this time by a majority of small societies containing only about one seventh of the membership.<sup>25</sup>

When the Cigar Makers finally decided that the vote should not be cast by each local society as a unit but by each member "in his individual capacity," so vague was their conception of popular government that some of the subordinate unions failed to grasp the significance of the new rule. Some reported the whole membership as voting in favor even though a bare majority had passed the measure. For example, if a local union had a membership of one hundred and fifty, and one hundred and twenty were present, of whom ninety voted for and thirty against a measure, one hundred and fifty were reported as voting in favor of the measure. The president was forced to explain what was really meant by popular vote.<sup>26</sup>

The experience of the older organizations has been repeated by some of the newer ones. When the Plumbers were considering at the conventions of 1894 and 1896 the advisability of adopting the initiative and referendum, the question was raised whether the vote should be counted according to the number of local unions or the number of members. Alarmed at the possibility of one large union in New York, Chicago, or Boston, with a membership of a thousand, outvoting fifty small ones with an average membership of twenty, the small societies urged that each local union cast only one vote.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, a delegate from one of the large societies declared: "One man is just as good as another wherever found. If there are a thousand members in Chicago, every one of those thousand members is entitled to an expression of his ideas, just the same as an individual member of the smallest organization."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> This measure could be enforced in the small towns where machinery or division of labor had not been introduced. Its enforcement was impracticable in the large cities where team work and the use of the molding machines commonly prevailed (Cigar Makers' Official Journal, March, 1883).

<sup>26</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, April, 1883.

<sup>27</sup> Proceedings, 1894, in Supplement to United Association Journal, vol. ii, no. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Proceedings, 1896, pp. 26-27, in Supplement to United Association Journal, vol. iii, no. 1.



Illustrations might easily be multiplied, but enough have probably been given to show that there has been little idealization of democratic forms of government by the American trade unionists, that the initiative and referendum were sometimes introduced in a form far from democratic, and were made truly democratic only against great opposition.

Why, then, have the initiative and referendum been adopted by American trade unionists? Primarily they have been employed between the sessions of the convention to transact business which cannot be wisely entrusted to the executive board, yet can be postponed only with grave inconvenience until the next convention. To a minor degree they have been used to limit the power of the representative assembly. The power of convention has been so limited, first, because the difficulty of establishing an adequate system of representation has enabled the convention to pass measures reflecting the opinion of the minority rather than of the majority, and second, because the local unions, fearful lest their independence should be to some extent limited, have been reluctant to entrust wide discretionary powers to the delegates who represent them in the delegate assembly. Some organizations, therefore, require that enactments passed by convention must be submitted to popular vote. Thirdly, the frequent lobbying and the serious factional disputes recurring during elections of officers by convention and the difficulty of establishing an adequate system of representation have led a small group of associations to elect officers by the general membership. Finally, the holding of conventions is a heavy financial burden. As the members have become accustomed to governing themselves directly, to save expense the representative assembly has been convoked less and less frequently, and greater use has been made of the initiative and referendum. Some observation will be offered on each of these four reasons for the use of this instrument of government.

The use of the initiative and referendum to transact between conventions business which may not be safely entrusted to the officers of the executive board admits of easy

explanation. As has been pointed out, the attempt of the convention to retain all legislative power has invariably failed, since in unexpected emergencies national officials have not hesitated to violate old rules or adopt new ones. To vest even limited legislative power in an executive board already exercising important executive and judicial functions, as a few unions have done, results in creating during the period between conventions a form of government dangerously akin to bureaucracy. Even if the board is not tempted to abuse its authority, the local unions may refuse to obey its decrees. Always prone to rebel against regulations of the federal union, the local societies will be much more inclined to do so when such restrictions have been imposed by a small board. Opposition to bureaucracy, to bossism, to clique legislation, serves as a good excuse for their disobedience. To avoid such a contingency, sixty-six national unions adopt amendments to the rules during the period between conventions by means of the initiative and referendum.<sup>29</sup> The rules so passed reflect the opinions and interests, not of a few leaders, but of the whole body of members. The mandates issued by this authority no local society can find the slightest excuse for disobeying.

To prevent delay, a few unions permit local societies and members to appeal from decisions of the executive board to popular vote. The usual method of appeal to convention causes a delay of many weeks or months in securing a final decision. Guilty members and local societies are thus able to postpone their well-merited punishment, and innocent parties suffer grave injustice by being deprived for many weeks of the full and impartial hearing that will easily acquit them. On the other hand, the court of popular vote is always in session, and cases are not kept waiting long on its docket.

This method of administering justice is, however, very

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<sup>29</sup> Early in the history of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, when the advantages of adopting legislation between conventions by means of the popular vote was being discussed, one writer said: "Now, if we want an amendment, we have to wait till next convention. Under the system of the initiative and referendum, we can get it any time" (*The Carpenter*, June, 1883).

crude. Each side writes a statement of its case, and this, together with all other possible documentary evidence, is considered by the members at meetings of the local unions. Cross-questioning of witnesses is of course impracticable. Perhaps because of the crudity of the method, judicial decisions are submitted to popular vote by far fewer organizations than those which use the legislative referendum.

Applications of local societies for strike benefits are submitted to popular vote by some unions because of frequent dissatisfaction with decisions of the executive board. The consideration of such applications cannot be postponed until next convention because strikes, to be effective, must be declared immediately. At the same time the local union whose application has been refused is usually much disgruntled, accuses the members of the board of graft and favoritism, and often proceeds to strike without the aid of funds from the national treasury, with disastrous results to itself and indirectly to the federal organization. Occasionally local unions have been so rebellious and so bitterly resentful that the officers or the executive board have asked to be relieved of the very disagreeable duty of sanctioning strikes.<sup>30</sup>

Another argument urged in favor of submitting applications for strike benefits to popular vote is that the members who must be taxed to support a strike should be permitted to say whether or not it should be declared; and it is further argued that if permitted to vote, they will pay the necessary assessments more promptly.<sup>31</sup> Use of the strike referendum delays considerably, however, the declaration of hostilities, and the members display little discrimination in making decisions. Almost invariably applications for financial assistance are granted. Perhaps this is the reason why the

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<sup>30</sup> For example, the president of the Miners' National Association, which was organized in 1873, was vested with power to grant strike benefits. He was so bitterly attacked, however, whenever he refused financial assistance, and found his advice so uniformly disregarded that he urged the submission of applications for benefits to a vote of the members (National Labor Tribune, November 7, 1874).

<sup>31</sup> See *The Laster*, August 15, 1888, p. 2.

strike referendum has been used to so limited an extent by American trade unions.

While the use of the initiative and referendum between conventions is not designed to restrict the functions of the representative assembly, it does so to a considerable extent. Save in the unions of Coopers and Potters<sup>32</sup> the convention has, indeed, full power to amend or abolish any rule adopted by popular vote, but in practice it would hesitate a long while before changing a rule adopted by an overwhelming vote of the members. When judicial disputes are decided by the general membership, the representative assembly exercises, except in three unions, no judicial power.<sup>33</sup> In addition, applications for strike benefits and various other matters are rarely considered by the convention when an opportunity exists for transacting such business by popular vote.

The second great purpose in the introduction of the initiative and referendum has been to limit the power of the representative assembly. The enactments of the convention are submitted to popular vote by some fifteen associations. This policy has been adopted because of the decentralized character of American trade unions and because of the difficulty of obtaining an adequate system of representation.

In decentralized national unions the constituent local societies do not allow their delegates to exercise discretionary power at meetings of the convention for fear that these delegates, subordinating local to national interests, may permit the undue absorption of functions by the central organization. The delegates are restrained in two ways: Either they must vote according to very specific instructions from

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<sup>32</sup> The Coopers provide that no rule enacted by popular vote within the six months before the assembling of convention can be modified by the delegates. The Potters provide that amendments adopted by a vote of the members shall have precedence over those enacted by convention.

<sup>33</sup> The exceptions are the Bakery and Confectionery Workers and the Steam Engineers, which permit members to appeal either to popular vote or to the next convention, and the Actors, which give members such a choice, and also permit appeals to the convention from the popular vote.

the local unions, or, if allowed to use their own judgment, they must submit all their decisions to a vote of the members.

Efforts of the American trade unions to limit the convention to a specified program have invariably failed. Frequently the best and most feasible plan is not suggested beforehand, but is conceived during the debate on the floor of convention. Frequently, also, concessions must be made by all sides before a measure can be adopted. To be sure, the delegates may postpone the consideration of a measure from one session to the following one, recommending that during the interval its merits and demerits be discussed in the journal and at meetings of the local societies. By this means the delegates are able to come to the next convention fully instructed how to vote. When a scheme is new and unfamiliar, and a preliminary campaign of publicity may be necessary to induce the members to pay the increased dues needed to carry out the plan or to cooperate in other ways for its success, such deferment may be wise; but in many instances such a policy delays unnecessarily the inauguration of imperatively needed reform. Indeed, so seriously is the efficiency of the representative assembly impaired by any effort to restrict its initiatory power that the older national unions such as the Iron Molders<sup>34</sup> and the Cigar Makers<sup>35</sup> soon ceased to limit the delegates to the consideration of measures on which they had been instructed. Only six out of one hundred and thirty national unions try to carry out such a policy at the present day.<sup>36</sup>

Some fifteen national unions attempt to retain control over the delegates by requiring the submission to popular vote<sup>37</sup> of all measures that they adopt. Thus the initiatory

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<sup>34</sup> Proceedings, 1867; Proceedings, 1868.

<sup>35</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, April, 1877; Constitution, 1880.

<sup>36</sup> These are the Electric Workers, Flint Glass Workers, Glass Bottle Blowers, Leather Workers, Locomotive Firemen and Engineers, and Print Cutters.

<sup>37</sup> The Steam, Hot Water, and Power Pipe Fitters and Helpers have adopted a scheme which is a compromise between the method of instructing delegates and the system of submitting to popular vote measures advocated by the delegates. Amendments which have

power of the convention remains unimpaired and at the same time the members have the assurance that the delegates cannot put into force a measure to which the majority is opposed. Moreover, a strong minority is less apt to break into open rebellion against measures adopted by popular vote. As a writer in an early journal of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners declared, in terse though inelegant language: "Make your laws in convention and pack them down the throats of the members and they will be ignored. Frame your laws and let the members ratify them as laws and they will be respected."<sup>88</sup>

Another reason for submitting measures adopted by convention to a vote of the members has been the difficulty of securing adequate representation in that body. Frequently only a minority of the local unions send delegates to the federal assembly. Rules promulgated by such a minority will naturally be ignored, and efforts to enforce them may drive some of the local societies to secede. Recognizing this, associations which do not regularly use the referendum do sometimes submit the enactments of a slimly attended convention to popular vote. Because so many local societies failed to send delegates, the Plumbers required for a time that all legislative proposals of the convention must receive popular sanction before becoming effective; and since the abolishment of this fixed rule, poorly attended conventions have voluntarily submitted important measures to vote of the members.<sup>89</sup>

This use of the referendum is less imperatively needed when the expenses of delegates are paid from the national treasury since, under this policy, practically all the local

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been submitted three months prior to the convention and which have been published in the trade journal, and hence upon which the delegates have been instructed by their constituents, become law as soon as ratified by a two-thirds vote of the delegates. Amendments which are initiated on the floor of convention must, if approved by the delegates, be ratified by means of the referendum. "

<sup>88</sup> The Carpenter, February, 1884.

<sup>89</sup> Proceedings, 1894, in Supplement to United Association Journal, vol. iii, no. 1; Proceedings, 1896, pp. 26-27, in Supplement to United Association Journal, vol. iii, no. 1; Proceedings, 1899, in Plumbers, Gas and Steam Fitters' Official Journal, September 25, 1899.

societies secure representation. In the Iron Molders' Union about 1882 one group of members was advocating that all expenses of delegates be paid by the national organization. Another group was urging that, without shifting the burden of paying expenses, a more equitable method of legislating be secured by referring all measures adopted by the convention to the general membership. The system of paying delegates from the federal treasury was finally adopted, and the policy of referring the work of convention to popular vote has never been inaugurated.<sup>40</sup> 'An official of the Journeymen Barbers' National Union declared to the writer that such popular ratification of legislation was not needed in his organization because the expenses of delegates were paid by the national union, and hence the local societies were always fairly well represented in convention. Nevertheless, the Cigar Makers, Pattern Makers, Piano and Organ Makers, and Tobacco Workers, which pay the expenses of delegates from the central treasury, do use the referendum for this purpose, apparently because the local societies fear to trust the delegates with final legislative power.

In all the older national trade unions, officers were elected by convention. During the last ten or fifteen years there has been a decided tendency toward election by popular vote, and such a system exists at the time of writing in perhaps eighteen national unions. The movement toward popular elections has resulted primarily from a desire to avoid the lobbying and wire-pulling which not infrequently characterize the elections of officers in convention. The delegates nearly always split into parties in support of rival candidates, and the fiercely contested factional fights between these parties threaten sometimes to split asunder the organization, and always leave bitterness and ill feeling. "There are," declared a trade-union official to the writer, "always half a dozen men after my job, and they use all kind of wire-pulling in trying to get it." "When officers

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<sup>40</sup> Iron Molders' Journal, May, 1882.

were elected by the convention," confessed the secretary of another union, "I was always forced to have a clique or following of my own among the delegates of that body. Since the system of popular elections has been introduced, it has not been necessary to do so."

The popular election of officers has been introduced in some cases through the efforts of a faction which had been dissatisfied with the success of another faction in dominating the convention. For example, an officer of a certain union was not of the sort that is "popular with the boys." He was a strict disciplinarian, rigidly enforcing the rules. He did not have the hail-fellow-well-met temperament. The group with whom he was unpopular succeeded finally in defeating him and in electing a man of a wholly different type. The defeated official and his friends bent their efforts to secure the inauguration of a system of popular elections. They were successful, and, it is interesting to note, were equally successful in electing their candidate, who has retained his office ever since. In another association where there has been a long struggle between the socialistic and non-socialistic groups the conservatives dominated the convention and held all the offices. The socialists advocated election by popular vote as a possible means of defeating their opponents. The president had been particularly drastic in his efforts to suppress socialism, and its advocates were very anxious to encompass his downfall. At first they proposed that the president should be elected by popular vote and the other officers by convention, but this attack on the president was so apparent that later they proposed the election of all officers by vote of the members. Finally, such an amendment was adopted.

The failure of many local societies to have representation in convention has been another cause tending to bring about popular elections. Naturally the defeated candidate and his followers are very quick to point out that the successful rival has been elected by the representatives of a small minority of the organization. Sometimes, also, pop-



ular elections have resulted from a struggle for supremacy between the large and the small local unions. In the Cigar Makers' International Union the small societies at an early date secured the adoption of a rule to the effect that at elections of officers in convention each subordinate union, irrespective of the size of its delegation, should have only one vote. Since the expenses of delegates were paid by the international union, the small local unions were well represented, and by means of this rule they controlled elections. The large local unions were much dissatisfied, and their influence was added to that of the socialists in favor of electing officers by vote of the members.<sup>41</sup>

The lengthening of the interval between conventions, due to the desire to save the cost of holding such meetings, has caused an increasing use of the initiative and referendum. A few New England associations once held conventions semiannually or even quarterly. At first, the New England Lasters' Association, formed in 1879, called its delegates four times a year. This organization consisted then of only twenty-three local societies, all in Massachusetts, and all embraced within an area not over sixty or seventy miles in circumference. After the territorial jurisdiction had widened to include branches established in Maine and New Hampshire, quarterly conventions were abolished, and the delegates assembled semiannually. Later, as local unions outside of New England were brought into the organization, the expense of holding conventions increased greatly; at the same time, as the framework of government had now taken on fairly definite form, frequent amending of the constitution was less imperatively needed. Since 1890, therefore, conventions have been held annually instead of semiannually.<sup>42</sup> Today only one small organization, the Pen and Pocket Knife Grinders and Finishers' Union, with a juris-

<sup>41</sup> As early as 1881 the delegate from subordinate union No. 144, in New York City, the largest local society of cigar makers in the country, was advocating the popular election of officers (Proceedings, 1881, in Cigar Makers' Official Journal, October 10, 1881).

<sup>42</sup> The Laster, April 15, 1890.

diction confined practically to New England, holds conventions semiannually. All the other federal organizations convoke the representative assembly not oftener than once a year. Furthermore, as has been pointed out, the convention remains in session a very short time. Every effort is made to rush through business and adjourn within a week or ten days.

To the workman, with his slender income, even short annual conventions, held for only a few days, are a heavy burden of expense.<sup>43</sup> At the convention of 1902 the Iron Molders paid more than \$50,000 for the mileage and per diem allowance of their delegates.<sup>44</sup> The convention of Cigar Makers in 1896 cost \$30,000.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, save for election of officers, the submission of matters to popular vote costs little. National business can be considered by the members at the regular meetings of the local union. Even the cost of special circulars can be saved by publishing in the official journal the amendments and other measures submitted to the members. Therefore, as the trade unionists have become more and more familiar with the possibilities of the referendum, they have convoked the delegate body less frequently, and they depend more on the method of transacting business by popular vote. At the same time, as the interval between convention widens, more of the small local societies can afford to send delegates. The sessions of the representative assembly are also less apt to be unduly shortened because of the expense, and in consequence measures receive more deliberate consideration than formerly.

Government by convention, however, has several advantages over government by popular vote. One of these advantages is the esprit de corps developed by the personal

<sup>43</sup> See Report of the President (Proceedings of the International Typographical Union, 1900, p. 72, in Supplement to the Typographical Journal, September, 1900).

<sup>44</sup> Proceedings, 1902, in Supplement to Iron Molders' Journal, September, 1902, p. 769.

<sup>45</sup> Proceedings, 1896, in Cigar Makers' Official Journal, October, 1896, p. 58.

contact of the delegates. To these delegates the federal organization is no longer an abstraction, but becomes real and tangible. The spirit of fraternity is developed. The representative assembly is particularly valuable for this purpose in the early days of a national union. The convention also serves as a liberal education to the officers and members. It acquaints them with trade conditions in various parts of the country,—knowledge invaluable in bargaining with employers. It reveals the harmony and the conflict of interests between the local societies, the need of cooperation, and the need of compromise on all sides to make such cooperation possible. This spirit the delegates carry back and impart to their local union. Then, too, they stand sponsor for the enactments of convention, defend them when they are attacked, and explain away any opposition arising from a misconception of their purpose. Such a spirit of unity and fraternity may be stimulated and such knowledge imparted through the trade-union journal, wherein appear transactions of the national association, reports on trade conditions, and the doings of local unions; but the journal cannot supply the personal exchange of information and opinion.

Systematic formulation of a new constitution or reorganization of an old one by means of the initiative and referendum is impracticable. The organizations which have abandoned the policy of holding conventions or convoke them at long intervals create periodically a small committee which draws up a unified series of amendments and submits them to the members. The constitutional committee at conventions performs the same function, but the advantage of the convention is that it permits a discussion by the delegates from various sections and various branches of the trade. The measure is more apt to be modified to suit the many conflicting interests when initiated by convention, than when drawn up by a small committee. The convention is, therefore, especially needed when an organization is young and its constitution is in the formative stage.

In 1879 the Cigar Makers began a thorough reorganization of their whole system of government, and embarked upon various new activities. For several years previous the association had been holding conventions biennially, transacting business during the interval by means of the referendum. Now the union decided to convoke conventions annually, in order to thrash out more thoroughly than was possible by means of the referendum the practicability and the necessary modifications of the newly adopted measures.

In new organizations, for this reason, the delegates are usually called together annually. There are, of course, exceptions, such as the Paving Cutters and the Quarry Workers, who have copied the constitution of the Granite Cutters, and the Tobacco Workers, who have copied that of the Cigar Makers. In imitation of the associations after which they are modeled, all of these recently organized unions hold no conventions. Most of the unions established since the depression of the nineties, however, hold conventions annually, and twenty-five out of thirty-six new unions make no use of the referendum. As national organizations grow older and become better unified, as their fundamental rules begin to take definite form and the machinery of government begins to run smoothly, the work of convention becomes lighter, and much of it is merely routine. When such a stage is reached, the delegates are called together less frequently. At the same time the system of the initiative and referendum is adopted or its use extended in those associations where it has already been introduced.<sup>46</sup>

The initiative and referendum have not been used with complete success by American trade unions, and the experience of the unions with these methods of government has revealed numerous weaknesses. Of these weaknesses some are serious and all are irritating, particularly to trade-union

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<sup>46</sup> Only eight organizations formed prior to 1895 do not use the referendum. One of these is the Bricklayers and Masons. The others are the railway unions, namely, the Maintenance-of-Way Employees, Railway Conductors, Railroad Telegraphers, Switchmen, Railway Trainmen, Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, and Locomotive Engineers.

leaders, who at times have condemned in rather vigorous language this scheme of popular government.

The experience of the American trade unions reveals six distinct defects in the initiative and referendum as governmental devices :-●

(1) The members show lack of discrimination in casting their ballots.

(2) They fail to vote.

(3) They manifest undue activity in submitting constitutional amendments and appealing from judicial decisions to popular vote.

(4) Systematic and thorough revision of the constitution by the initiative and referendum is difficult.

(5) Delay is caused in sanctioning strikes by means of the referendum.

(6) Popular elections of officers are expensive, and give rise to bitter controversies and fraudulent practices.

The most important weakness of the system of direct government has been the lack of discrimination displayed by the trade unionists in casting their ballots. This defect was clearly brought out by the president of the Iron Molders' Union at a recent convention. "While the referendum vote," he declared, "is undoubtedly founded upon correct principles, the result of its use in labor organizations has not always been in harmony with progressive thought. It is an unfortunate fact, but truth compels me to say it, that our members do not give important questions submitted to their decision the careful study and intelligent thought they should, but allow themselves to be swayed by their prejudices or their fears. . . . In my experience with the Iron Molders' Union, and it is the experience of nearly every labor organization, it has devolved upon the higher intelligence of the leaders of our membership in convention assembled to initiate important reforms or take advance ground in our movement."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> "Officers' Report and Proceedings, in Supplement to the Iron Molders' Journal, September, 1902.

The idiosyncracies displayed by the trade unionists in casting their ballots are various. One of the most striking is the tendency to reject all proposals either to increase the monthly dues or to adopt new activities entailing a heavier burden of taxation. In 1890 the convention of Carpenters and Joiners raised the dues of the members only to have the measure promptly defeated when submitted to popular vote.<sup>48</sup> Again, in 1892, proposals of the convention to increase the dues, create a large central strike fund, and establish a system of sick benefits were with equal promptness defeated by the referendum.<sup>49</sup> The Iron Molders, who make no provision for submitting to popular vote the legislation adopted by the representative body, inaugurated the system of high dues with little opposition at the convention of 1895. Speaking of the increase of dues, the president of the Iron Molders declared at the convention of 1902: "Had such a proposition been submitted to referendum vote there is not the slightest doubt that the change would have been overwhelmingly defeated. And yet, even those who in 1895 were loudest in their condemnation, will admit that it was the wisest step ever taken."<sup>50</sup>

Sometimes the members will vote to adopt a new activity, but will fail to provide adequate funds to carry it out. On one occasion, at a convention of the Plumbers, the proposal was made that the question of establishing a sick benefit be referred to popular vote. After some discussion, the delegates decided not to do so for fear that the members would vote to increase the amount of the benefit—fixed by convention for the time being at only one dollar a week—yet would not provide the funds from which to pay it. As a result, the plan would be a total failure, and would probably be permanently abandoned. The tendency of the members to vote in this inconsistent fashion may be illustrated by an incident occurring in the United Brotherhood of Car-

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<sup>48</sup> *The Carpenter*, December, 1890.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, March, 1892.

<sup>50</sup> *Officers' Reports and Proceedings*, in *Supplement to the Iron Molders' Journal*, September, 1902.

penters and Joiners about 1895. The fund set apart by this organization for the payment of the death benefit had become insufficient because of the high death rate, this in turn being due to the rapid increase in the average age of the members. The convention decided to reduce expenditures by lowering the amount of the benefits, and at the same time to increase the receipts by charging a registration fee of fifty cents to each new member. When the two proposals were submitted to popular vote, both were overwhelmingly defeated. As a result, an assessment of thirty cents had to be levied on each member to meet death claims legally due. Seven hundred dollars had to be borrowed for this purpose from the "protective fund" and twelve thousand dollars from the "organizing fund," thus greatly crippling the power of the union to carry on its belligerent and industrial activities.<sup>51</sup>

On matters of collective bargaining the vote of the general membership is usually quite radical. Very often more is to be gained by compromising with employers than by demanding extreme terms and thus compelling resort to a strike, which may fail completely. If the members are allowed to give their opinion, they often refuse to compromise. The trouble is, as a prominent trade-union official explained to the writer, that a few radical members in each local society can usually prevent the great majority from pursuing a safe and conservative course. The radicals declaim to the effect that the union should not retreat. They denounce those who favor a compromise as cowards or perhaps even as traitors and bribe-takers. By such bluster they try to frighten the conservatives into silence, and if the ballot is not taken secretly may force them to vote against their convictions. "When serving as national organizer," said this official, "I had to speak on several occasions before a local society which my brother officers and myself considered to have pursued a very foolish policy. Often the vote to pursue that policy had been

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<sup>51</sup> Report of the General Secretary, in Proceedings, 1896.

unanimous. But before I had finished speaking, a majority had been won over to my way of thinking. They had not been converted, however, by my eloquence or my logic. Many had believed as I did from the beginning, but they were afraid to say so until they found that a national officer held the same opinion."

The refusal of the rank and file of union members to make concessions to employers was illustrated in the Iron Molders' Union about 1901, when the question of permitting a large number of apprentices to learn the trade was submitted to popular vote. From several causes the industry was developing faster than the increase in the supply of men to perform the work. At various conferences with the officers of the national union the employers in the Stove Founders' Defense Association had demanded some reduction in the ratio of apprentices to journeymen, in order that a larger number of apprentices might learn the trade. The national union officers were willing to make some concession,—in fact, thought that the ratio should be lowered; but the ratio of one apprentice for every eight journeymen had been a provision of the Iron Molders' constitution for many years, and the members were strongly opposed to any change. The proposed ratio of one to five was, therefore, overwhelmingly defeated by a vote of 15,842 to 504; and a second proposal to fix the ratio somewhere between one to five and one to eight met a similar fate by a vote of 12,314 to 3978.<sup>52</sup>

The members use little discrimination in voting on applications of local unions for strike benefits. Some unions never refuse an application, and pride themselves on never having voted against a strike. Other unions vote affirmatively on every strike application until the funds begin to get low or strike assessments begin to bear heavily upon them. Thenceforth they reject every application even though the strikes in question may be much more justifiable than those already sanctioned. The purpose and necessity

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<sup>52</sup> Report of the President, in Officers' Reports and Proceedings, 1902.



of the strike and the conditions favorable or unfavorable to its success are not taken into consideration.

The tendency of the local unions to approve all strike applications without discrimination may at times be exceedingly disastrous.<sup>53</sup> At the beginning of the industrial depression in 1893 a number of local societies in the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union applied to the central association for strike benefits. The international officers realized that struggles with employers at such a time were doomed to failure and desired to limit the number of strikes sanctioned, but they had no authority to do so. All strike applications had to be submitted to the local unions, and almost invariably they were approved. In fact, the organization was preserved only by a subterfuge. The international executive board prevented the otherwise inevitable approval of all strike applications by refusing to submit many of them to the referendum, on the pretext that the local unions had not followed the proper procedure in making such applications.<sup>53</sup>

The members show a similar lack of discrimination in electing officers by popular vote. The Plumbers abolished the system of popular elections after several years' trial because they thought that officers of greater ability were elected by convention than by vote of the members. They argued that the convention usually contains many of the most able men in the organization, who take a prominent part in the discussion; and when the election of officers takes place, the others naturally turn to them as the men who should be made their leaders. On the other hand, the rank and file have little means of knowing which members possess ability.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, it frequently happens that the members follow rather blindly the advice of local leaders in voting for the several candidates for national offices. When the old officers are candidates for reelection, often the whole vote

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<sup>53</sup> Report of the Secretary, in Proceedings, 1894.

<sup>54</sup> Proceedings, in Supplement to United Association Journal, vol. iii, no. 1, p. 28.

of the local society in those subordinate unions where there are a few leading men opposed to the existing administration is opposed to the national officers. In those branches where the leading men are friendly to the administration the vote is favorable.<sup>55</sup>

Popular elections are said also to result in the reelection of the officers in power. There may be other candidates who are much better fitted for the positions, but they are comparatively unknown, or possess only a local popularity. On the other hand, the men already holding office have a decided advantage over the other contestants because their names are familiar to every member in the organization. When on one occasion a local society of tobacco workers was requested to nominate candidates for office, its members replied, "We are very well pleased, indeed, with the present international officers and place them all in nomination for reelection."<sup>56</sup> The other local societies of tobacco workers held much the same opinion, and all the officials were retained in office by large majorities. When in 1904 the Pattern Makers elected their officers by popular vote for the first time, the result was an overwhelming victory for the old officers. The president of the Pattern Makers declared this tendency of the members to reelect the old officers to be a serious defect, and at his suggestion the system of election by convention was restored.<sup>57</sup>

That popular elections in the trade unions tend to prolong the tenure of existing administrations is, however, very difficult to prove. Officers are repeatedly reelected by convention as well as by popular vote, and under both systems often continue in office for many years. Adolph Strasser, former president of the Cigar Makers, was regularly reelected by each succeeding convention from 1879 until his voluntary retirement in 1892. His successor, George Per-

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<sup>55</sup> See discussion in *Proceedings of the International Union of the United Brewery Workmen of America*, 1896.

<sup>56</sup> *The Tobacco Worker*, October, 1905.

<sup>57</sup> Report of the President, in *Pattern Makers' Journal*, August, 1904; Report of the President, in *Pattern Makers' Journal*, September, 1905.

kins, has since then been regularly reelected each term by popular vote. Nevertheless, an outsider has greater difficulty in unseating the officers in power under the system of popular elections than under the system of election by conventions.

The trade unionists believe that the members can be educated to cast their ballots intelligently. "In a new organization," declared a prominent trade-union official to the writer, "there is little hope that the members will exercise intelligently the power placed in their hands. But there is also little surety that representative government will be more successful at such an early stage. Moreover, the trade unionists, like other people, learn by their mistakes. They can, I believe, be educated to use the ballot intelligently. Experience has already shown that, as a union grows older, the members vote with greater discrimination, and, in general, the system of the referendum proves much more satisfactory." The members are greatly aided in rendering intelligent decisions by the discussions in the journal, which is published by nearly every national union. Like the daily newspaper in the democratic State, the trade paper has become an important mold of public opinion, and under wise and scrupulous management may help the members to display good judgment in casting their ballots.

Another great difficulty which the trade unions have experienced in their use of the referendum is the failure of a large part of the members to vote. Only on very important questions, such as proposed changes in the system of sick or death benefits or a proposed increase of dues, is the vote large; and even then a great number fail to cast their ballots. Very often a subordinate society, engrossed by local affairs, will neglect even to consider at its meetings a matter referred to it by the national union. One delegate reported to the convention of Plumbers in 1896 that the local union of which he was a member had not voted on a single question submitted to it by the national officers during the period since last convention. Such a measure would be

tabled from week to week, and finally its consideration would be postponed indefinitely.<sup>58</sup> On one question referred to the members of the United Association of Journeymen Plumbers at this time, only one hundred and one local societies voted out of about one hundred and ninety. On one occasion early in the history of the Cigar Makers' International Union seventeen local societies voted and thirty failed to return their votes on questions submitted to them.<sup>59</sup>

When a local union does trouble itself to consider a measure referred by the national union, the ballot is frequently cast at a late hour when local business has been disposed of and many of the members have gone home. The result is that often the vote of even those local societies which make returns includes only a small portion of their membership. On one occasion in the Cigar Makers' International Union only about 2700 out of 20,000 members voted on a question submitted to referendum.<sup>60</sup> In the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners the returns on four measures submitted to the members by the national officers in 1892 were made by 352 locals out of 798, and the total number voting was only 8880 out of a membership of 57,937.<sup>61</sup> Often, therefore, the referendum means the rule of a minority over a majority too indifferent to perform its part in the government of the organization.

When at least a majority or two-thirds vote is required to pass a measure, decisive action is frequently difficult to obtain. For a time the Bricklayers required that all applications for strike benefits must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the local unions, but very often not even a bare majority of the local unions voted on the applications. In consequence, until the system was reformed, no local society could secure an assurance of the financial assistance of the international union.<sup>62</sup> Some national unions provide that

<sup>58</sup> Proceedings, in Supplement to United Association Journal, vol. iii, no. 1, p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, May, 1876.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., December, 1886.

<sup>61</sup> The Carpenter, March, 1892.

<sup>62</sup> Report of the Secretary, in Proceedings, 1888.

when a local society fails to return the vote of its members, they shall be counted as having voted in the affirmative. It is argued that if a local union were greatly opposed to a particular matter, it would take the trouble to vote. This assumption is not always correct.

Some associations compel members to vote by imposing fines for failure to do so. These unions proceed on the principle which may some day find general acceptance in the democratic State, that the act of voting is a duty as well as a privilege, and that a man who shirks this duty should be punished. The Chain Makers and the Stove Mounters impose fines for failure to vote on any question submitted to referendum. Unions of a few other trades, such as the Bakers, Carriage and Wagon Workers, Cigar Makers, Coopers, and Tobacco Workers, levy such a penalty only when a full vote is considered especially important. The Bakers and the Carriage and Wagon Workers thus impose a fine only for failure to vote at the election of officers, and the Coopers only for failure to make a decision on applications for strike benefits.

At first the members do not use their right of initiative; later they use it too frequently.<sup>63</sup> When the system of direct government has been recently inaugurated and is still unfamiliar, little advantage is taken of the right to initiate legislation. Shortly after its adoption by the Carpenters in 1884, the officers expressed great dissatisfaction because the members, while criticising freely the method of government, made no attempt to rectify defects by submitting amendments to popular vote.<sup>64</sup> Though the Iron Molders adopted the initiative and referendum in 1876, no use was made of them for some years thereafter. About 1884, when the methods of government in this organization greatly needed reforming, the necessary legislation was not passed by

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<sup>63</sup> Sidney and Beatrice Webb have shown the existence of a similar tendency in British trade unions (*Industrial Democracy*, p. 23).

<sup>64</sup> *The Carpenter*, June, 1884. See also *ibid.*, February, 1884.

means of the referendum, but by a convention especially convoked for the purpose.<sup>65</sup>

After the members have grown accustomed to legislating for themselves, the pendulum is apt to swing too far to the other extreme. The constitution is amended too frequently. Unimportant, trivial, even fantastic measures, as well as emergency legislation, are proposed for adoption by the several local unions. It is true that a large number of such proposals are voted down when put to popular vote, but much time is consumed, and the association is subjected to needless expense. Furthermore, many of the more sensible amendments are adopted, and thus the fundamental rules are kept in a continual state of change. At times not even the officers know what is the rule on a certain subject. The result is often administrative chaos.

This irresponsible tendency to submit constitutional amendments was well illustrated at a certain period in the history of the Cigar Makers. After 1879 the referendum was used by the union not only to adopt legislation, but also to sanction strikes and make judicial decisions. Thus the members had ample opportunity to become familiar with the system of direct government, and they soon began to exercise very frequently their right of initiative. Requests to submit constitutional amendments to popular vote poured into the headquarters of the association. Every local society seemed to consider that to propose one or more amendments was an important duty. The secretary of a local union in Omaha wrote to the central office that as the other local unions were proposing amendments, the members of the Omaha society thought that they ought to propose one, also, that the rest of the trade might know that the branch in Nebraska was still in existence.<sup>66</sup> The character of these amendments varied widely. On one occasion a local union submitted a series of amendments covering every part of the constitution from the preamble to the last article.<sup>67</sup> Another union proposed to start a cooperative

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<sup>65</sup> Iron Molders' Journal, May, 1884.

<sup>66</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, July, 1883.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., August, 1887.

shop in towns where the unions had less than fifty members. A third proposed to reduce the per capita tax from sixty to thirty-six cents because there was a surplus of several hundred dollars in the national treasury.<sup>68</sup> Another demanded that the system of paying sick benefits be abolished. This last proposal roused the anger of the president, who was an enthusiastic advocate of the sick benefit scheme, and had secured its adoption after a long and hard struggle. "The regular time to amend the constitution—especially when such an important question is involved—is," he declared, "during the annual convention when everything can be discussed and ventilated."<sup>69</sup> Another local society proposed to raise the president's salary, but that officer again urged that the matter be left to the next convention, where it could be properly discussed. He asked the unions to vote against the measure, and in accordance with his advice it was voted down.<sup>70</sup> Writers in the official journal declared that the frequent amending of the constitution created inextricable confusion. "Not one man in a hundred," they said, "knows what the rule of the association is on any matter. This uncertainty leads to lack of respect for and violation of the law, and is demoralizing to the association."

Because of the mania for proposing legislation, most national unions have limited the initiatory power of the local unions. Usually an amendment proposed by one local society must be endorsed by a certain number of others before it is submitted to popular vote. In the Cigar Makers' International Union a measure had to be seconded at first by four and later by ten local unions before it could be brought to referendum vote. The consent of twenty branches is now required.<sup>71</sup> The number of necessary endorsements at the present time varies widely in different unions. In some, only ten are needed; in others, a proposition must be seconded by one third of the local unions before it is submitted to the general membership. In some

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<sup>68</sup> Cigar Makers' Official Journal, March, 1883.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., June, 1881.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., May, 1883.

<sup>71</sup> Constitution, 1882; Constitution, 1884.

associations measures proposed by the local societies must be approved by the general executive board before being submitted to the referendum. The Carpenters and Joiners and the Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen require the endorsement either of the general executive board or of a specified number of other branches. Some eight associations give the subordinate unions no right of initiative, and permit only the national executive board to submit amendments to popular vote.

The right of appeal to popular vote from judicial decisions of the national executive board is frequently abused, and local unions make such appeals when they have not one valid argument with which to support their case. These appeals consume time and also occasion considerable trouble and expense to the organization, and a few associations restrict the right of the subordinate unions to make them. The Carriage and Wagon Workers provide that an appeal from judicial decisions to referendum vote can be taken only when two local societies in different cities demand it. The Machinists and the Railway Clerks require that the plea of a local union for justice must be endorsed by twenty-five other societies before it may be brought to a popular vote. The Metal Polishers provide that the members or the local unions wishing to appeal to a vote of the members must make a deposit of fifteen dollars. This sum is forfeited if the members decide against them. The Painters, Decorators, and Paper Hangers allow a local union to appeal to popular vote only at its own expense.

A thorough and systematic revision of the constitution and by-laws by means of the initiative and referendum is difficult. We have shown that even under the system of representative government, to bring order out of legislative chaos the convention had to refer all amendments for revision and systemization to a small constitutional committee. Amendments desired by the local unions can be revised and systematized in similar fashion by a popularly elected committee, and several associations have engrafted such a legislative committee upon the system of direct government.



The Granite Cutters, who have ceased to hold conventions, revise the constitution at intervals by means of a committee of seven, which is elected by a plurality vote of the members. This committee considers amendments proposed by the local societies, selects those which it deems desirable, and presents all laws for ratification or rejection by vote of the members. The Tailors, who hold conventions at irregular and infrequent intervals, also elect such a committee to revise the constitution.

However clear, definite, and harmonious may be a series of amendments as originally drawn up by convention or by a legislative committee, they are often ambiguous and conflicting in the form finally adopted by the members. It frequently happens that while a section requiring the organization to undertake a certain activity is adopted, another section necessary for the efficient administration of the activity fails to pass. The president of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners said on one occasion: "My observation has been that very often a measure adopted by the delegates in convention who discuss carefully each section of the proposed rules is definite and clear. But upon being passed by a general vote of our members it is usually as clear as mud—often conflicting, always indefinite, scarcely ever interpreted alike by any two members."<sup>72</sup> He proposed as a remedy that only general questions—as, for example, whether such and such a policy or such and such a benefit be adopted—should be submitted to a simple yeas and nays vote of the members. The detailed rules necessary to carry out the proposal could, he thought, be drawn up by convention. Such a plan has not been adopted by the international unions.

A serious objection to the use of the strike referendum is the long delay before the vote can be counted and the decision announced. When strike applications are submitted to the general executive board, a reply can be sent back by use of the telegraph, sometimes within twenty-four hours. When submitted to referendum, often several weeks

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<sup>72</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1898, p. 8.

or a month passes before all of the local unions can hold meetings and the result of the vote be sent in to headquarters. In industries where conditions change rapidly the slow working of the machinery of the referendum is especially serious. In the building trades a strike, to be effective, must be declared without delay. If the question is submitted to the referendum, the work may be finished before the strike is declared. Moreover, in many industries the periods of activity and depression alternate rapidly, often according to the season of the year, and a strike is therefore more likely to succeed at one time than at another. If the inauguration of the strike is much delayed by use of the referendum, the propitious time may have passed.

Another fact to be noted is that the delay in declaring the strike gives the employer an opportunity to learn that such a movement is in contemplation. This objection, however, is not considered serious. Then, too, in most industries conditions are more or less static during the short interval required to submit a strike application to the referendum. Indeed, some labor leaders contend that the delay is advantageous. The local society has time for calm consideration, and thus may be led to adjust its grievance peacefully, or, if the matter is a petty one, may on second thought decide not to declare a strike. It is also true that by rigidly enforced administrative rules the time required to return the vote to headquarters may be considerably shortened. The Cigar Makers, who have used the strike referendum for nearly thirty years, require the vote, under penalty of a fine, to be returned within one week from the day on which the strike circular was mailed. Local societies situated more than six hundred miles from the central office are allowed to return their vote by telegraph at the expense of the international union.

The strike referendum is not, however, very popular, certainly not so popular as the legislative referendum. Though one of the earliest forms of direct government to be adopted by American unions, it is used by some twenty organizations

at the present day, as compared with more than seventy unions which submit constitutional amendments to popular vote.

The election of trade-union officers by popular vote has several drawbacks which have deterred some organizations from adopting the system. The most serious objection is the expense, which is always greater, sometimes very much greater, than the cost of maintaining the convention during the short time required by that body to elect officers. The first popular elections held by the Cigar Makers' International Union in 1892 cost the association about \$15,000. The rules of this union provided that a candidate, to be elected, must receive a majority of the votes cast. Because of this provision, four ballots had to be taken, and in consequence the expense was quadrupled.<sup>73</sup> This rule was later modified by the provision that on the second ballot all candidates should be dropped save the two receiving the highest number of votes. By this means, not more than two ballots ever had to be cast, and thus the expense was reduced at the second election to \$5029. Although it has been still further reduced on subsequent occasions,<sup>74</sup> the cost of popular elections is still considerably greater than that of election by convention.

Parties or factions are found in the trade union, and, as in the democratic state, the struggle of these factions to place their candidates in office subjects the system of popular elections to grave abuses. It is true that parties are often created in the trade union from honest and not unhealthy differences of opinion. For example, there is likely to be a radical progressive faction favoring high dues and a national system of benefits, and a conservative or reactionary party which favors low dues and a restriction of national union activities. The Boot and Shoe Workers' Union for several years has been divided into two warring camps over the question of the union label. The faction in power has advocated the policy of using the label, not to

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<sup>73</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1893.

<sup>74</sup> Report of the President, in Proceedings, 1896.

secure an immediate increase of wages, but to increase the membership as quickly as possible, and so ultimately build up a strong organization. In order to secure the union stamp, the manufacturer is therefore only required to employ union workers. He may pay the same rate of wages as before. He is also partly protected by the arbitration clause in his label contract from frequent strikes on the part of his employees. On these terms many manufacturers are willing to use the label, and thus a number of workers in previously non-union factories have been forced into the organization. The members of the other faction consider this policy dilatory and vacillating. They think that in return for the use of the union stamp the employer should be required to raise the wages of his workmen. They dislike, also, the policy of arbitration, and favor the older and more belligerent method of the strike.<sup>75</sup> Factions or parties within the union frequently do not arise from disputes as to policy but merely from the ambitions of the leaders. One of the commonest forms of party struggle in the trade union is the contest between the administration officials who try to retain their offices and rival leaders who endeavor to secure their places.

From whatever cause such parties may arise, their existence is not infrequently harmful. Sometimes both sides resort to abusive language, and the whole union becomes thoroughly disorganized. Sometimes, also, the factions resort to ballot-stuffing and other fraudulent methods.<sup>76</sup> In

<sup>75</sup> Report of the President, in the *Shoe Workers' Journal*, July, 1907.

<sup>76</sup> The general secretary-treasurer in his report to the eighth convention of the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union in 1907 gave the following six possibilities of fraud in elections by popular vote (*Shoe Workers' Journal*, September, 1907, p. 35) :—

"First: Only a small percentage of members vote, falling far short of a popular expression and leaving vast opportunity for fraud

Second: Those who do not vote may be voted by the local inspectors.

Third: The ballots of those who do vote may be changed by the local inspectors.

Fourth: Unions may be disqualified for technical and unintentional errors or omissions.

Fifth: Unions may be disqualified by persons committing fraud purposely to disqualify the union.

Sixth: The general inspector of election may be influenced."

a recent popular election in the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union charges of fraud were made by the old officers, who were defeated candidates for election. The national executive board called for a reelection. One faction, denying the authority of the board to require this, carried the controversy into the courts, which declared that the executive board of the national trade union had legal power to take such action. The matter was finally settled by calling a special convention, where the controversy was thrashed out, and where the old officers were again chosen. Several years ago a similar instance occurred in the Glass Workers' Association. At a popular election, held about 1896, the candidate of one faction in that organization was declared elected. The other faction demanded that the ballots be recounted, and on the recount its candidate was declared successful. The case was carried into the courts, which decided that the first candidate had been elected; but, in spite of this decision, the controversy raged with much bitterness for some time.

Notwithstanding these various objections to the initiative and referendum, the trade unionists are continuing to use this system of direct government for an ever increasing number of purposes, and have also become enthusiastic advocates of its adoption by state and municipal governments. To inaugurate the system of direct legislation in American States and municipalities, various elements such as the Grangers, the reform leagues, and the socialists have lent their aid; but the group of men who have probably been most active in this agitation are the trade unionists. Their attitude is not difficult to explain. In the first place, they have found that the defects of the referendum are not irremediable, and that these defects do not outweigh its obviously great advantages. After more than forty years of experience with the referendum, therefore, they are still very strongly in favor of that system of government. At the same time, they are hostile to the representative form of government because, as they would express it, the pro-

fessional representatives betray the interests of the laborers and become tools of the capitalist class.

The attitude of the unions may be illustrated by a quotation from the United Mine Workers' Journal. In 1905 the miners of District 2, Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor adopted resolutions in favor of the initiative and referendum. Speaking of these resolutions, the journal said: "It is . . . the beginning of a movement to restore sovereignty to the people which has been insidiously but surely wrested from them until now the people are but voting machines to register the will of political bosses, composed chiefly of corporation agents. The flagrant defiance of the will and demands of the people is not even apologized for, nor is any explanation given and those chosen as servants have, by the gross usurpation, become the masters. . . . Next year, will come a golden opportunity to the Grangers and trade unionists of Pennsylvania. A governor and legislature are to be elected. Now is the time to begin preparations for the coming battle to restore to the people their rightful power to rule themselves. . . . The Journal will from time to time, attempt to arouse those who permitted this degrading state of affairs to flourish to their rights, powers and duties as American citizens."<sup>77</sup>

In the above quotation reference was made to the possibility of cooperation between the Grangers and the trade unionists. In the struggle for direct legislation the trade unions have sometimes joined hands with the Grangers; and when such a combination has taken place, success has usually followed. The trade unionists, aided by the farmers, secured the adoption of both the initiative and the referendum in Montana, and compelled the adoption of an advisory initiative and referendum in Texas.

The American Federation of Labor stands pledged by resolution of several conventions to the inauguration of the system of direct legislation, and state and city federations in various parts of the country have worked energetically

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<sup>77</sup> United Mine Workers' Journal, May 25, 1905.

for its adoption. Of these struggles the campaign which has been carried on by the labor unions of Massachusetts for the adoption of the initiative and referendum in that State is more or less typical. This movement was started in Boston about 1900 by the Boston Central Labor Union. Thence it spread to other parts of the State. Finally, in 1903, six hundred and seventy-four unions petitioned the legislature to submit to the people an amendment embodying the initiative and referendum. Numerous secretaries of local trade unions and labor federations wrote to their representatives, and committees from various organizations waited upon members of the legislature, urging them to support the measure. While the bill secured a majority vote, it failed to poll the necessary two-thirds vote. But the count stood 120 to 82, and the unions, in no wise discouraged, have continued the agitation.<sup>78</sup>

The method of questioning candidates in order to secure laws favorable to the workman, which has been employed by the American Federation of Labor since 1901, has also been successfully used by it in the fight for direct legislation by the people. Candidates for election to the State legislature have been questioned, and under the threat of defeat have pledged themselves to vote, if elected, for an amendment embodying the principles of the initiative and referendum.<sup>79</sup> This method of sounding candidates made possible the adoption of direct legislation in Montana, and caused the legislatures of Missouri and Delaware to submit to a vote of the people the question of introducing the initiative and referendum. In Toronto, Canada, and various cities in the United States the adoption of the system of direct legislation has resulted primarily from the questioning of candidates by organized labor. Largely as a result of this agitation, the movement in the various American States and municipalities toward direct legislation by the people has made rapid progress.

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<sup>78</sup> Shoe Workers' Journal, May, June, 1903.

<sup>79</sup> American Federationist, December, 1903, pp 1292-1293.





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